21020

NATIONAL LIBRARY
OTTAWA

CANADA

BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE
OTTAWA

NAME OF AUTHOR... Everett Griffin

TITLE OF THESIS... A Critical Re-Assessment of John Dewey as an Educational Philosopher and Social Reformer

UNIVERSITY... of Alberta

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED... Doctor of Philosophy

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED... 1974

Permission is hereby granted to THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

(Signed)... Everett Griffin

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

2461 So. Beatrice

Detroit, Michigan

DATED... March 5 ... 19 74

NL-91 (10-68)

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

A CRITICAL RE-ASSESSMENT OF JOHN DEWEY AS AN EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHER AND SOCIAL REFORMER

by

© EVERETT GRIFFIN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1974

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "A Critical Re-Assessment of John Dewey as an Educational Philosopher and Social Reformer" submitted by Everett Griffin in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

M C Bhattacharya
.....
Supervisor

.....

.....

.....

.....
External Examiner

Date 13th February, 1974

ABSTRACT

There are many--educators, philosophers, and laymen--who thought and still think that much of what John Dewey wrote and taught was sound in principle and consistent in spirit, that he showed by doctrine and action that man's intellectual capacities could successfully deal with any problematic situation. John Dewey, as liberal philosopher, educator, and social reformer tried to do certain things. I try to understand these attempts in his own terms, that is, by his own standards and those of his disciples. This dissertation is an attempt to show that Dewey did not display the sort of radical social and educational liberalism with which his name is commonly associated.

John Dewey viewed philosophy as a socio-cultural phenomenon with a negative and a positive role. Its subject-matter is the specific, widely felt, and urgent problems and conflicts of the time. As a liberal philosopher and social reformer, Dewey, as claimed by Paul Arthur Schilpp and others, was primarily concerned with the solution of the urgent problems of his time, that is, the problems of his contemporary American society. It is my claim that nowhere does John Dewey provide the plans and policies to resolve the urgent problematic situations. I show that he, as a social reformer, did not proceed in a fashion which would have been consistent with his own philosophical recommendations. I also show that Dewey did not treat in a satisfactory manner the problem of alienation, one of the most pressing social problems in highly industrialized societies. Moreover, he was not astute enough in his treatment of Marxian conceptions, nor did he recognize the similarities between his own position and that

of Marx. I point out a problem in the American scene which Dewey saw fit to avoid--the racial conflict between black and white Americans. I also show that John Dewey did not consider the problems of any minority group worthy of his labors. I add an analysis of two of his most important works, and show them wanting in the light of his own philosophical recommendations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Dr. N. C. Bhattacharya. It was he who guided me through difficult years to a positive and fruitful conclusion of my formal studies. He provided instruction and advice regarding intellectual matters as well as displaying humanism toward my social and personal wellbeing.

I am also indebted to Professors A. M. Mardiros and H. W. Hodysh for giving me encouragement.

Lastly, I would like to thank Mrs. Edna Wright and Dr. George Ferree--my former teachers--for teaching me some fundamentals of life's work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	DEWEY'S CONCEPTION OF THE NATURE AND ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY	11
III.	JOHN DEWEY AS EDUCATOR AND SOCIAL REFORMER: A HISTORICAL ACCOUNTS	32
IV.	CAPITALISM AND ALIENATION KARL MARX AND JOHN DEWEY: A SOCIOLOGICAL COMPARISON	72
V.	JOHN DEWEY AND THE "AMERICAN DILEMMA": A CRITICAL ANALYSIS	106
VI.	CONCLUDING REMARKS	142
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY		155
APPENDIX A		161
APPENDIX B		167

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

John Dewey is beyond question one of America's great philosophers; in fact, by many, he is considered the "dean" of American philosophy and all that is distinctive of American philosophical thought. Dewey, however, being much more than a mere philosopher, wrote on many subjects over a long and fruitful scholarly life, and as a social reformer worked for certain worthy causes. It was indeed for him a great achievement to be recognized as the intellectual leader of the Progressive Movement in American Education as well as the liberal conscience of his time.

Dewey still retains considerable influence on American thinking in many areas, particularly in educational and social thought. The efforts of the Center for Dewey Studies—which has published a five-volume series *The Early Works of John Dewey* and has been working on the next fifteen-volume series--are at least one evidence of this influence. All his important works are available in print, and a considerable number of articles dealing with his views on various matters regularly appear in American periodicals. However, writings about him are often uncritical and adulatory.

It is true that many aspects of Dewey's works were criticized in his own lifetime. Bertrand Russell, Morris Cohen, George Santayana, Arthur E. Murphy, and others criticized many of his specific doctrines. But, on the whole, he has not come in for strict scrutiny by American philosophers generally, and particularly by educational theorists who appear to be most influenced by his works. The impression still remains

that much of what Dewey said and did was sound in principle and consistent in spirit. Professor Paul Arthur Schilpp who inaugurated the series entitled "The Library of Living Philosophers" with *The Philosophy of John Dewey* in 1939 wrote about Dewey, claiming:

> [Dewey] lived what he taught and preached, without regard to applause of either his professional colleagues or of the masses. Dewey thus showed by action as well as doctrine his faith in man's intelligent capacities to cope with any situation, with any problem.[1]

In what follows I wish to dispute the claim contained in this and other statements of a similar nature that Dewey after all "by action as well as by doctrine" displayed the sort of radical social and educational liberalism with which his name is widely associated. I hope to show that his liberalism was "half-hearted," and as a social reformer in dealing with certain serious social problems of his own time he simply could not live up to the demands he placed upon himself as a philosopher of "the common man." This, then, is the burden of the present thesis.

The study is not an examination of Dewey's specific philosophical theories or an assessment of his particular social and educational recommendations. It is an attempt to look at John Dewey—the social and educational reformer—within the context of his own conception of the nature of philosophy and its role in human affairs. The nature of this task is such that my work cannot be anything but interdisciplinary, drawing upon available historical, political, and sociological observations. After all, it is a compressed critical study of the "thought and action" of a man who was at the same time a philosopher, an educational

---

[1] Paul A. Schilpp, "The Faith of John Dewey," in *Horizons of a Philosopher: Essays in Honor of David Baumgardt*, ed. by Joseph Frank et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1963), p. 373.

thinker, and a social reformer.

Chapter II is a brief exposition of Dewey's conception of the nature and role of philosophy. It is devoted to Dewey's notion of philosophy as a cultural phenomenon; the relationship between science, knowledge, and philosophy; and lastly with Dewey's notion that philosophy can be conceived as the general theory of education. In Dewey's mind, philosophy is a cultural phenomenon with historical and cultural relativity: different epochs, social groupings, and races should have different philosophies of life. It is criticism, a deliberate and systematic attempt to make common and natural goods more secure, coherent, and significant. Science, knowledge, and philosophy are in his way of thinking closely interrelated. Science is "intelligence in action." It is the method of verifying and validating knowledge in the form of facts; whereas, philosophic thinking uses the fruits of scientific knowledge—its method and facts—to formulate generalizations to predict and control future consequences and actions. Philosophy is the general theory of education if one is "willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental dispositions, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow men." Philosophy's "auditing of past experience and its program of values must take effect in conduct,"[2] and the school is the chief formal agency in the shaping of motive and action, character and conduct. Philosophy must become instrumental to men struggling for a more humane and better world, or mankind will continue to struggle under the burden of antiquated ideas and

---

[2]John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1916), p. 328.

plight of the American Negro. In fact, as I shall discuss in a later chapter, he never recognized the existence of any serious racial problems in the United States of America.

Chapter IV is a discussion of capitalism and "alienation." I attempt to compare Karl Marx's explicit and comprehensive conception of alienation with that of Dewey's which is implicit and fragmentary. Taking the vastness of the subject into account, I limit my efforts to pointing out certain striking similarities between Marx and Dewey in the tenor of their sociological observations and concerns, in particular, their definitions of alienation and recommendations for its supersession. On the issue of violent revolution, Dewey, however, parts company with Marx. Though Dewey, like Marx, was a "power" philosopher dedicated to intelligent use of force in the resolution of social ills, he was a gradualist, a reformer, not a revolutionary in the true sense of the word. While in agreement with Marx that political "revolutions" are necessary to start desired social transformations, Dewey was hopeful of peaceful and gradual transitions of political power as opposed to the revolutionary Marx. In fact, he looked forward to gradual and peaceful transitions where the captains of industry would sit down with labor and relinquish their power in the interest of a more secure and humane society.

Chapter V, entitled "John Dewey and 'The American Dilemma': A Critical Analysis," deals with a subject which has never received adequate attention and consideration. Dewey, the philosopher and social reformer, readily and persistently insisted that the purpose and business of philosophers were to clarify men's minds about the pressing problem

institutions which are hindrances to the realization of a society commensurate with the time.

While I am aware that there is no general agreement among philosophers as to the "aim and office" of philosophy, and some philosophers, Brand Blanshard for example, have accused Dewey of confusing the role of a philosopher with that of a social reformer,[3] I do not enter into these discussions. My purpose is to accept Dewey's own conceptions of philosophy as presented and of its role *in practical social* affairs, and from there to move on to examine the "unity" of thought and action as displayed by Dewey in his lifelong social and educational thinking as well as in his reform activities. In other words, the chapter is to serve as a preface to my study.

Dewey states that, upon the whole, persons and situations have been the main forces which have influenced his thought.[4] The Chicago experience, particularly Hull House and the Laboratory School, provided facts that bridged the gap between theory and practice. It is these "practical" experiences which gave new direction and quality to Dewey's philosophical development. The influence of Hull House was permanent. It was there, under the influence of Jane Adams and others, that Dewey's "social philosophy became articulated and more specific," and "from the nineties on, he became America's intellectual spokesman for practical social reform, for the elimination of specific injustices, and for the positive

---

[3]Brand Blanshard, "Can the Philosopher Influence Social Change?", *Journal of Philosophy*, LI (1954), pp. 731-753.

[4]John Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," in *John Dewey On Experience, Nature and Freedom*, ed. by Richard Bernstein (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1960), p. 15.

reconstruction of a democratic community that would become more humane and in which all would share the benefits."[5] Moreover, Hull House's influence is further reflected in Dewey's enthusiasm for labor union activity and his measured acceptance of World War I as a war to end all wars. These, then, are the topics discussed in Chapter III entitled "John Dewey as Educator and Social Reformer: A Historical Account": (i) Dewey's association with Hull House at Chicago and the influence it might have had on Dewey's mind; (ii) the possible broadening of Dewey's conception of education and of its importance in social life; (iii) Dewey's work with the labor unions; and, lastly, (iv) his role as a clarifier of issues during the First World War, and his thinking about America's lasting contribution to a strife-ridden world. The chapter deals with the development of Dewey's social awareness and his consuming interest in relating philosophy to social action.

While I try to point out Dewey's liberal strivings, the chapter is on the whole quite critical of many of his ideas and actions. I do specifically point out, among others, what I regard as the "dis-union" of Dewey's professed liberalism and his course of action in the affairs of Local 5 of AFT, an affiliate of American Federation of Labor, his active support for "intelligent" force (but not "violence") in defending America's entry into the First World War, and his uncritical enthusiasm over the so-called New World "ideals" in reshaping those of the Old (i.e., Europe); I also refer to his turning away from the problems and

---

[5] Richard Bernstein, *John Dewey* (New York: Washington Square Press, Inc., 1967), p. 37.

of their own times. Strangely enough, Dewey never in fact addressed himself in direct fashion to the racial problems in America, nor did he complain of racial segregation in the nation's schools. This chapter is an attempt to provide an answer which is based on a detailed discussion on Deweyan lines of the psychological concepts of "habit," "attitude," and "disposition," and of such other notions as "collective habit," "custom," and "folkways." Habits, attitudes and dispositions are, in Dewey's mind, outgrowths and expressions of an individual's interaction within a particular social environment. It is out of agreement with this notion that I follow with a consideration of the formation of "racist habits, attitudes and dispositions" as I perceive them.

The upshot of my analysis is that Dewey never really overcame or transcended those attitudes or dispositions which alone could have helped him to look objectively at a problem which Alexis de Tocqueville described as the "most formidable of all the ills which threaten the existence of the United States." Dewey, to be fair, did not preach racism in any conscious form. However, "conduct is always shared" and "neutrality is non-existent."

> Washing one's hands of the guilt of others is a way of sharing guilt so far as it encourages in others a vicious way of action. Non-resistance to evil which takes the form of paying no attention to it is a way of promoting it. The desire of an individual to keep his own conscience stainless by standing aloof from badness may be a sure means of causing evil and thus of creating personal responsibility for it.[6]

His fault is one of omission, for which there must be some reason. Again, I agree with Dewey in that "a man who *can* stand properly does so,

---

[6]John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Modern Library, 1950), p. 17.

and only a man who can, does."

> A man who does not stand properly forms a habit of standing improperly, a positive, forceful habit. The common implication that his mistake is merely negative, that he is simply failing to do the right thing, and that the failure can be made good by an order of will is absurd. Conditions have been formed for producing a bad result, and the bad result will occur as long as those conditions exist.[7]

Towards the end of the same chapter I point out with appropriate documentation (Appendix A) that Dewey filed secret reports with U.S. Army Intelligence on the "radical elements" in China, and also on certain sections of the Polish community in Philadelphia. These would be considered rather strange deeds on the part of a radical liberal educator who in his more scholarly writings was urging for free flow of information, open discussions, universal participation, shared experience, etc., as preconditions of scientific temper and democratic socialism. These inconsistencies and contradictions between "action" and "doctrine" can neither be overlooked nor easily brushed aside.

Chapter VI, the last chapter, is designed to summarize my findings in earlier ones. I move from Dewey's conception of philosophy to brief commentaries on two of Dewey's most important works, *Democracy and Education* and *The Public and Its Problems*. Dewey says that philosophy should be instrumental in providing for generous plans and policies to resolve specific conflicts between groups and classes, nations and races, rich and poor, old and new. In order to provide vision in the form of policies and plans to be tested in action, the philosopher must become the naturally sensitive and affectionately informed critic caught

---

[7]John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (New York: Modern Library, 1950), p. 29.

up in the movements of events, not a mere spectator. He must consciously experience suffering and enjoying as he interacts within the social environment. Then and only then will the philosopher see "true" connections, and his inferences be the product of a full and rich conscious experience. The chapter is an attempt to show that Dewey's doctrine of social and educational liberalism was half-hearted, and from a practical point of view almost vacuous. It seems ironic that he formulated a comprehensive theory of experience to be tested in action when he never addressed himself to any particular and specific problem in the way he recommended to others, nor can it be justly claimed that he actually participated in any serious social issue or problem from a grass root perspective.

The thesis is of a destructive nature and purposely so. From the present writer's viewpoint it is a product of "experience"—as Dewey employs the term—with America's so-called "Liberal" heritage which John Dewey helped to shape.

As implied earlier, there is a renewal of interest in Dewey's works among American scholars and social reformers.[8] There are those who are convinced that America is finally "mature" enough to implement the social philosophy of John Dewey to eradicate its many present social ills. But any reassessment of John Dewey's contribution to American democratic and liberal creed must take into account not just his positive contributions which have been well eulogized over the years but also his shortcomings, in particular, his failure to see certain inconsistencies

---

[8] *Humanist Magazine*, March/April, 1973, pp. 18-34.

in his own thought and action. Such a task—the present essay being a small contribution in that direction—will be quite consistent with the cultural role John Dewey prescribed for philosophy.

Chapter II

DEWEY'S CONCEPTION OF THE NATURE AND ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY

Philosophy as a Cultural Phenomenon

Man living in Western civilization is living in highly complex societies where evolutionary and radical social change is commonplace, almost an everyday phenomenon. Change, rapid and varied, is not only a fact, but a primary defining characteristic of modern life. Society exists in transmission and communication. It is an entity caught up in never ceasing biological continuity. What is the role of philosophy in such a dynamic world? What are its distinctive aim (purpose) and office (business)? In other words, what are the purpose and business of philosophy in relationship to the movements of events?

According to Dewey, philosophy is a cultural, historical phenomenon reflecting existing conditions and uncertainties. Great philosophy is always intrinsically related to the cultural environment from which it arises:

> . . . the distinctive office, problems and subject-matter of philosophy grow out of stresses and strains in the community life in which a given form of philosophy arises, and that, accordingly, its specific problems vary with the changes in human life that are always going on and that at times constitute a crisis and a turning point in human history.[1]

Thus, for Dewey, philosophy is an outgrowth of and is intimately linked

---

[1] John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p. v.

with human affairs, i.e., the social, intellectual, and emotional aspects of living.

Philosophy being a cultural phenomenon is intrinsically connected with a certain phase of the historical evolution of a particular civilization or society. Different epochs produce different philosophies in the course of a society's evolution. Moreover, different groups, especially social classes, have different social philosophies. Here Dewey recognizes that things exist in cultural relativity and diversity: that is, he is aware that different social classes, nations, and races of men have different value orientations and word usages to communicate such orientations.

> Even when words remain the same, they mean something very different when they are uttered by a minority struggling against repressive measures and when expressed by a group that has attained power and then uses ideas that were once weapons of emancipation as instruments for keeping the power and wealth they have obtained.[2]

> If the ruling and the oppressed elements in a population, those who wished to maintain the *status quo* and those concerned to make changes, had, when they became articulate, the same philosophy, one might well be skeptical of its intellectual integrity.[3]

Meanings given conventional symbols are not in themselves conventional. They are dependent upon agreement and disagreement "of different persons in existential consequences."[4] Furthermore, meanings and the significance of events differ in different cultural groups and

---

[2]John Dewey, *Problems of Men* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1946), p. 135.

[3]John Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), p. 10.

[4]John Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938), p. 47.

the "import of conditions upon social inquiry is obvious. Prejudice of race, nationality, class and sect play such an important role that their influence is seen by any observer of the field."[5]

Philosophy as a historical phenomenon exists in the concrete—"in having temporal passage and a diversity of local habitations. Open your histories of philosophies, and you find written throughout them the same periods of time and the same geographical distributions which provide the intellectual scheme of histories of politics, industry, or the fine arts."[6] Thus, the work of philosophy and the philosopher is, in Dewey's view, ultimately and intrinsically engulfed in cultural necessity in the sense that it is a reflection of the ongoing movements of events.

Philosophy arising out of a particular cultural environment, "having temporal passage and diversity of local habitations," comes to deal with issues and problems which are common to the masses of men, and are peculiar to a definite location. Philosophy, in Dewey's view, should consciously reflect and clarify the dominant interest in the minds of the people by bringing the unconscious state of mind to the consciousness of man. In other words, one of philosophy's primary tasks becomes that of conversion; conversion of the unconsciousness of the masses to a state of consciousness factually based and logically consistent.

Philosophy is relative in that being a human and cultural

---

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 438.

[6] Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*, p. 4.

phenomenon it has a past, present, future and is, therefore, located in space-time. Philosophies of any particular epoch are distinctive in that they are symbolic of "the large patterns of continuity which are woven in effecting the longer enduring junctions of a stubborn past and an insistent future."[7] The subject-matter of philosophy is the specific practical issues and conflicts of the time. Problems, issues, and conflicts are particular. We speak of this impoverished group of needy and suffering human beings or this or that specific political and economic organization. We want enlightenment concerning this or that concrete organization or group of individuals, this or that specific institutionalized social arrangement.

Problems, issues, and conflicts are rooted in the cultural environment from which they emerge. They are of course problems of a fundamental nature in that they are inherent in the very structure of the existing sociocultural fiber from which they spring. As a result, philosophy is "a revelation of the predicaments, protests, and aspirations of humanity"[8] as they present themselves within a given temporal and local habitation.

The function of philosophy then is to deal with specific, practical issues and problems of the time. The problems and issues of men being existential entities vary according to the stresses and strains existent at a particular time and place. Therefore, some of the problems of men may, with the passage of time, be resolved or may

---

[7] Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*, p. 7.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

lose their relative significance, thus becoming no longer meaningful.

Philosophy as Criticism

Philosophy is criticism, and criticism is judgment. Philosophy is above all a method—the method of inquiry—for dealing critically with the problems of men. Philosophy as criticism differs from other kinds of criticism in its (i) generality and (ii) objective. Philosophy is "criticism of criticisms" in the sense that in its *generality* philosophy criticizes other "criticisms," i.e., science, politics, law, educational theory, which are themselves "criticisms" in their own right. The need for philosophical criticism arises because these "smaller" criticisms often become conflicting, as scientific findings may conflict with religious beliefs or legal practices; political dogmas may conflict with new ideals; sociological findings may conflict with legal precedents; etc., etc. Every science or theory is both analytic and synthetic as well as "criticism." Philosophy is "criticism of criticisms" in the sense that it tries to establish intercommunication among these, and to serve as a

> . . . generalized medium of intercommunication, of mutual criticism through all-around translation from one separated region of experience into another. Thus philosophy as a critical organ becomes in effect a messenger, a liaison officer, making reciprocally intelligible voices speaking provincial tongues, and thereby enlarging as well as rectifying the meanings with which they are charged.[9]

The *objective* of philosophy is to determine what is desirable or worthwhile—a satisfactory plan or policy to resolve the conflicts which

---

[9]John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1958), p. 410.

prompt one in the first place to philosophize. It is in this sense that philosophy is instrumental. That is to say, philosophy becomes an intelligent instrument. instrumental in the criticism of common and natural goods in an effort to render such "goods more coherent, more secure and more significant in appreciation."[10] Dewey writes:

> Its [philosophy's] business is to accept and to utilize for a purpose the best available knowledge of its own time and place. And this purpose is criticism of beliefs, institutions, customs, policies with respect to their bearing upon the good.[11]

Judgment as criticism has two functions to perform: analysis and synthesis. The analytic or discriminating aspect of philosophy is primarily negative in nature. Judgment as analysis, negative criticism, is concerned with particular parts of a whole, and a bringing of such constituent parts into consciousness. Whereas, synthesis is occupied with how the constituent parts of the whole relate to each other. That is to say, there is a negative, discriminative, "purging," as well as a positive, constructive, "building" aspect of philosophy as criticism.

Philosophy in its role of analysis must deal with problems and issues that are actively present, widely felt, and urgently awaiting resolution. Such problems if not resolved tend to accumulate and multiply.[12] Therefore, philosophy in its initial function becomes "a comment on nature and life in the interest of a more intense and just appreciation of the meaning of the present in experience."[13] Its one

---

[10] John Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1958), p. 410.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 408.

[12] Dewey, *Problems of Men*, p. 7.

[13] Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 407.

consideration in this role is with making known existing social conditions. This function is preparatory in that its sole aim, as Dewey sees it, is that of housecleaning to make room for new furnishings. Search for meanings becomes its essence; for philosophy is concerned with the meanings of events. Thus, the purpose of philosophy, in its negative, discriminative, "purging" sense becomes an effort to "clarify, liberate and extend the goods which inhere in the naturally generated functions of experience,"[14] by systematic, deliberate, and comprehensive criticism of existing values, beliefs, policies, customs and institutions.

Philosophy has of course the added role and responsibility to perform a more positive, constructive office. Its specific constructive office is formation of plans, policies or proposals which will produce desirable, i.e., more humane and liberal social consequences. In other words, philosophy which professes to be positive and constructive must be prescriptive and predictive. Its prescriptive function, as Dewey sees it, is intrinsically intertwined with adoption of scientific methodology. The place of science in philosophical work is thus, in Dewey's view, primary and indispensable.[15]

The constructive or prescriptive function of philosophy is seen in its capacity as an intellectual instrument the moment the philosopher attempts to formulate leading ideas and plans of action. It is responsible for projection of policies, plans, and measures in the form

---

[14]Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 407.

[15]*Ibid.*, p. 408.

of generous hypotheses to be tested in action. Dewey puts it this way:

> . . . the question of "what is to be done" cannot be ignored. Ideas must be organized, and this organization implies an organization of individuals who hold these ideas and whose faith is ready to translate itself into action. Translation into action signifies that the general creed of liberalism be formulated as a concrete program of action . . . . When its ideals are reinforced by those of scientific method and experimental intelligence, it cannot be that it is incapable of evoking discipline, order and organization.[16]

Thus, philosophy is more than an intellectual analysis or mere clarification. In its positive and prescriptive function it is synthetic and is designed to play an active role in giving directions to reconstruction of culture and community life.

Science, Knowledge and Philosophy

Science, for Dewey, is the method of "intelligence in action," a method which, he argues, should "be incarnate in every branch of study and every detail of learning."[17] The use of intelligence, patterned on the scientific method, as a means has a definite and profound effect upon ends attained; that is, intelligent ends are reached, and are made more probable, by the use of intelligent means. Dewey had an unqualified faith in the method of science. He thought of science as a supreme value in that it became "the supreme means to the valid determination of all valuations in all aspects of human and social life.[18] Furthermore, it became to him the only means for integrating warranted ideas in the nonhuman spheres of life with those of a human and social world.

---

[16] John Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1963), p. 91.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

[18] John Dewey, *Theory of Valuation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), p. 66.

Dewey recognizes the distinction between social and physical sciences. However, they are both outgrowths and expressions of a particular cultural environment. Dewey is willing to admit the immaturity of the social sciences as compared with those of the physical. He does not claim the degree of efficiency of method, as applied in the arena of social sciences, that exists at present in the physical sciences. The method of science, in the area of the social sciences, will achieve maturity "only when its use is extended to cover all matters of human concern."[19] To Dewey, science is of supreme value in the evaluation and production of verifiable knowledge in the social fields for the alleviation of present evils, many of which, he believes, are of a remediable nature.

Primarily, science has two functions: (i) to enable us to "know" things and (ii) to enable us to "do" things. Although science is intimately interconnected with philosophy, there is a valid distinction between the two. Science, in specific, is concerned with production of knowledge in the form of facts; that is to say, the purpose of science, in the production of knowledge, consists in its capacity to quantify facts. Philosophy is occupied with meanings and values.

Science produces knowledge; knowledge that consists in what has transpired, happened. The scientific method is the method not only of producing knowledge but is also the means of its verification. In its capacity as the *method* of detection and verification of knowledge, the scientific method becomes the means of separating grounded knowledge

---

[19] Dewey, *Problems of Men*, p. 11.

from mere opinion.

The primary role of science as sciencing is that of accuracy in telling. Science is concerned with disclosure of facts as tested knowledge; that is, the production of truths in the form of facts. However, Dewey cautions us to note that facts are more data, they are fragmentary and incomplete in their meanings and must, therefore, be rounded out, which is the job of philosophy.[20]

In philosophic discourse, facts have both particular and general import. Problematic situations are confused situations as to specific details, thus the need for clarification arises. The elements of the problem to be resolved consist of specific facts and qualities that are of a fragmentary and unsettled nature. They are first to be known as particulars belonging to a situation. The general import of facts, however, lies in their function of a reflective character. Facts that are settled and known are tools for extracting meanings from new experiences by projecting connections between the old and new.

Accordingly, science has both a negative and positive office in philosophic discourse. Negatively speaking, it is the discoverer and collector of facts, general and particular, as means to a more realistic and forthright philosophizing.[21] In order that the fruit of philosophy--wisdom, vision, imagination--shall not be contaminated, philosophers must "acknowledge responsibility to logical compatibility with demands

---

[20]Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*, pp. 10-11.

[21]*Ibid.*

of ascertained facts."[22] In other words, science in its role as "teller" displays characteristics of correctness and verifiable applicability in its effort to eliminate and exclude that which is not logically compatible with its established criteria.

Positively, science is the method of philosophic inquiry; it provides facts and proper mental techniques for the synthesis of warranted conclusions which may in turn result in policies and plans for action. Thus, it may be said that for Dewey science is the supreme means of all social action in the guidance of change.

Philosophic thought is highly intertwined with scientific thought.[23] Philosophy is concerned with meanings to be inferred from the facts of science:

> Given certain truths, the philosopher wants to understand their general significance, their coherence, the ways in which they alter the intellectual landscape, the ways in which they can lead us to envision new possibilities for human life.[24]

Wisdom, which is the product of philosophy, is different from knowledge in that it is the application of the "known" to the intelligent, moral conduct of human affairs. Thinking is prospective. The value of thought consists in its function of clarification through criticism, which defines problematic situations and suggests means for their resolution. Knowledge, in the form of fixed facts as produced by science, influences thinking by providing data which suggest connections to be rounded out

---

[22]Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*, pp. 10-11.

[23]Dewey, *Problems of Men*, p. 11.

[24]Bernstein, *John Dewey*, p. 2.

in philosophic discourse. Facts become connectives, and knowing is seen as a conscious effort, the purpose of which is continually to reconstruct environing conditions in desired directions pointed out by a philosophy.

Philosophy's primary occupations are with meanings, and the drawing of practical conclusions. Meaning has more depth and import than truth. Truth's significance, as displayed by facts that are scientifically detected and verified, lies in recordings of events and descriptions of existences. However, philosophic meaning extends beyond that which is grounded in science.

> Knowledge of the past is significant only as it deepens and extends our understanding of the present . . . . We must grasp the things that are most important in the present when we turn to the past and not allow ourselves to be misled by secondary phenomena no matter how intense and immediately urgent they are.[25]

Dewey considers philosophy as the search for wisdom. Knowledge, as warranted by scientific method, has a particular role to play in this search: "Philosophy is to use the methods and conclusions of our best knowledge, that called scientific, to provide the means for conducting the search."[26] Knowledge is of philosophic import in that its function is to provide intelligently derived and generous hypotheses to be applied to the conduct of human affairs.

Men think of a problem in an attempt at its resolution. To begin with, one is to separate scientifically observable and varifiable facts —grounded knowledge—from those that are not—those facts that are not

---

[25]Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 74.

[26]Dewey, *Problems of Men*, p. 11.

temporally and spatially fixed. The two combined, those that are spatially and temporally fixed and those that are not, constitute the terms or conditions of the problem in need of resolution. It is from existential and relevant facts of the problematic situation that generous hypotheses in terms of ideas, inferences are drawn. Hypotheses as ideas, values, and ends mark future references in being anticipations in resolving problematic situations. Dewey, as already indicated, makes a distinction between facts and meanings. Facts are products of scientific technique where "the accuracy of telling is the chief matter."[27] Meanings

> . . . have revelatory office which should be apprehended as correctly as possible. This is true of politics, religion, and art as well as of philosophy. They all tell something of the realm of existence. But in all of them there are an exuberance and fertility of meanings and values in comparison with which correctness of telling is a secondary affair. 28

It is not the purpose of philosophy to solve problems directly. Its chief task is to provide for wisdom, vision, imagination, so that intelligent action may resolve the difficulty which is in urgent need of resolution.

> There are human difficulties of an urgent, deep-seated kind which may be clarified by trained reflection, and whose solution may be forwarded by the careful development of hypotheses. When it is understood that philosophic thinking is caught up in the actual course of events, having the office of guiding them toward a prosperous issue, problems will abundantly present themselves. Philosophy will not solve these problems; philosophy is

---

[27] Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*, p. 10.

[28] *Ibid.*

> vision, imagination, reflection—and these functions, apart from action, modify nothing and hence resolve nothing.[29]

In brief, it may be said that Dewey looked upon philosophy as a mixture of scientific information, prudent analysis, and forward-looking speculation. Meaningful philosophy is the outcome of stresses and strains, problematic situations and aspirations of a particular socio-cultural environment. Prudent analysis is applied to the subject-matter; criticism is used to clarify the material as well as in testing the coherence of solutions that may seem adequate in any given situation.

Philosophy as Theory of Education

According to Dewey, philosophy may be conceived "as the general theory of education" if one is willing to accept the broad definition of education as the formation of fundamental dispositions and attitudes. Philosophy in its educative role becomes the examining of previous experiences with reference to future possibilities. Philosophy's educative work becomes, through cultivation of awareness and inquiry, the formation of "right" mental and moral attitudes in respect to difficulties of contemporary social life. Thought, ideas, attitudes, and dispositions are stimuli to action and conduct.

Philosophy as wisdom, when seriously entertained, is bound to be prescriptive in nature, recommending and influencing a certain outlook upon life's conduct. Most philosophical schools of antiquity were, in Dewey's view, ways of living and "those who accepted their tenets were

---

[29] Dewey, "The Need for a Recovery of Philosophy," in *John Dewey On Experience, Nature, and Freedom*, p. 66.

committed to certain distinctive modes of conduct."[30] Wisdom extends beyond mere comprehension of knowledge and applies to that which the known demands of us. Thus, philosophy is seen as instrumental to intelligent conduct, and not just as thinking for the sake of thinking alone.

Society is a living, organic entity whose existence depends upon successful environmental conversion; the life of any living entity is dependent upon the process of environmental conversion. Conversion, transmission consists in "continual readaptation of the environment to the needs of the living organism."[31] Education, in the broadest sense of the word, is the means necessary for continual social renewal and evolution; and this social renewal occurs through a "process" of conversion through communication.[32] Thus, broadly speaking, education, according to Dewey, should strive for the shaping of attitudes and dispositions to create an awareness about social beliefs, standards, etc., that are necessary for social continuity.

Dewey looks upon education as having two somewhat different but highly interrelated meanings: informal and formal. Generally, education is the means by which social continuity is perpetuated. Informal education is non-deliberate, incidental, and natural and occurs in the very process of social living. This education occurs as a result of an individual's interaction within a particular social environment. The

---

[30] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 324.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

social environment is made up of institutions which are agencies of human progress and welfare. Their primary educative function consists in the communication and reinforcement of certain ideas and values which individuals accept by incorporating them into their life-styles. Individuality is an achievement which takes place under particular environmental influences. In other words, institutions are socio-cultural arrangements which produce certain ideas, desires, habits, customs which, in turn, shape attitudes and dispositions of those individuals who interact within their environments.

Dewey seems to be in accord with Marx in the belief that the social environment (constituted of sociocultural institutions) is the determiner of the "consciousness" of men. Marx writes:

> The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political, and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness.[33]

An individual is born into an ongoing society. He becomes what he is, wittingly or unwittingly, negatively or positively, by virtue of what the environment makes possible, for "the environment consists of those conditions that promote or hinder, stimulate or inhibit, the characteristic activities of a living being."[34] The social environment "nourishes" its young. His actions, actual and potential, are highly dependent upon social sanctions. Informally speaking, the "social

---

[33]Karl Marx, "*Excerpt from* A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy," in *Marx & Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, ed. by Lewis Feuer (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), p. 43.

[34]Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 11.

environment forms the mental and emotional disposition of behavior in individuals by engaging them in activities that arouse and strengthen certain consequences."[35] Moreover, "the social environment exercises an educative influence unconsciously and apart from any set purpose."[36]

The school as a formal institution becomes a necessity in that the growth and complexity of society demand it. As civilization becomes more complex as a result of continuous growth the society is forced to transmit more in terms of cultural resources and achievements. Thus the school becomes a separate and distinct institution.

The school, like other institutions, is social. Dewey strongly suggests that the school should become a miniature society, ideally arranged which will most effectively exemplify social life. It should simplify the existing social life in an attempt to make its understanding and influence as easy and profitable as possible.

Attitudes and dispositions, aspirations and beliefs are communicated and inserted by "means of the action of the environment."[37] They are inculcated and assimilated by means of environment, thus being flavored with particular environmental influences. The school, as a special social environment, is but one means of transmission of attitudes and dispositions, beliefs and desires to the immature. And, comparatively speaking, it is superficial: "Only as we have grasped the necessity of more fundamental and persistent modes of tuition can we make sure of

---

[35]Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, pp. 16-17.

[36]*Ibid.*

[37]*Ibid.*, p. 11.

placing the scholastic methods in their true context."[38] However, the social value of the school lies in "its distinctively human effect—its effect upon conscious experience."[39]

According to Dewey, the school as a specially prepared social environment has three functions to perform: (i) "to provide a simplified environment" that "selects the features which are fairly fundamental and capable of being responded to by the young" and the establishment of "a progressive order, using the factor first acquired as means of gaining insight into what is more complicated"; (ii) to eliminate "the unworthy features of the existing environment from influences upon mental life" by introducing those values which are deemed desirable; and (iii) to become the great equalizer by "balancing the various elements in the social environment, and see[ing] to it that each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, and to come into living contact with a broader environment."[40]

With the school becoming a miniature and ideal society, all agencies and institutions existent in society at large are to be brought into its purview in embryonic form. The school should become, for example, an extension of the home, the child's most immediate environment. That is, the activities participated in by the child are to be similar to those already existent in the home and in the immediate neighborhood to

---

[38] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 4.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 11.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 20.

maintain continuity of activity and experience. However, the environment of the school should be designed so as to deliberately regulate conditions with reference to their educative effect. This is consistent with Dewey's claim that the main texture, the basis of the desire, habit, idea, attitude, and disposition are formed through indirect, incidental, natural education and that the most that "deliberate" schooling can do is "to free the capacities thus formed for fuller exercise, to purge them of some of their grossness, and to furnish objects which make their activity more productive of meaning."[41]

The school thus becomes the chief formal means of social regeneration and of social progress. It inculcates into the young those attitudes and dispositions that are deemed socially and morally desirable. However, to alleviate confusion, the intellectual and moral patterns must approximate the movement of events; only then will there by unity of thought and action. The psychological and the sociological, for the most part, occur spontaneously. All thinking, desiring, and planning occur in a constant state of flux within the context of environing conditions. On the other hand, the school being committed to the desirable must try to foster those habits of mind which are conducive to creative thought and imaginative reorganization of the pattern of life. As Dewey observes: "resolute thought is the first step in that change of action that will itself carry further the needed change in patterns of mind and character."[42]

---

[41] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 17.

[42] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 62.

If formal education, as a special institutional arrangement, deals in a more direct and desirable way with formation of thought and belief, then, for Dewey, the school should become the chief formal agency responsible for instilling desired attitudes and dispositions—the chief institution set aside for social progress and reform. The importance of school cannot be over-emphasized. Dewey writes that the unconscious environmental influences are "so subtle and pervasive that [they] affect every fiber of character and mind," and few people "recognize the extent in which our conscious estimates of what is worth while and what is not, are due to standards of which we are not conscious at all."[43]

As has been stated earlier, Dewey strongly supports the notion that ideas and beliefs form dispositions which lead to action, giving credibility to the further notion that intelligent beliefs, i.e., morally funded ideas and thought, lead to action characterized accordingly. Securing proper knowledge thus becomes one with securing morality. Knowledge acquired, through learning, shapes conduct and in this way affects the character of the knower.

> The conclusion is that conduct and character are strictly correlative. Continuity, consistency, throughout a series of acts is the expression of the enduring unity of attitudes and habits. Deeds hang together because they proceed from a single and stable self. Customary morality tends to neglect or blur the connection between character and action; the essence of reflective morals is that it is conscious of the existence of a persistent self and of the part it plays in what is externally done.[44]

The educative environment of the school is most conducive as a

---

[43] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, pp. 17-18.

[44] John Dewey and James H. Tufts, *Ethics* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932), p. 183.

"spawning" ground for inculcation of the "proper" attitudes and dispositions that will lead to the socially, morally, and scientifically needed and desired changes which will ameliorate existing social evils. Such attitudes and dispositions will induce vision, discriminating criticism, and hardy resistence to existing social evils with expressed intention toward their resolution.[45]

Dewey hopes that the school as a specially prepared environment will shape ideas and dispositions which will assist in the gradual reconstruction of the society. He hopes that this reconstruction, based as it is on the knowledge provided by science and wisdom born out of wider perceptions of need and direction, will work towards progressive social reform.

This brief account will explain, it is hoped, why John Dewey in his lifelong activities saw philosophy as closely linked with education and social reform.

---

[45] Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 210.

CHAPTER III

JOHN DEWEY AS EDUCATOR AND SOCIAL REFORMER: A HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

The philosopher is a socio-historical entity caught up in the movements of events of a particular culture in a certain specific time and place. In Dewey's words: "Philosophers are part of history, caught in its movement; creators perhaps in some measure of its future, but also assuredly creatures of its past."[1] His subject-matter and method are outgrowths and expressions of cultural phenomena as they partake in the movements of events.

The subject-matter with which the philosopher is to work are the specific problems of men as these occur within a particular socio-cultural environment. The philosopher is struggling with the most fundamental and urgent issues, problems, difficulties, and conflicts of the time in an effort to understand their social significance and to present imaginative ideas and plans for their resolution.

As concerns methodology, the philosopher as critic becomes a man of science, viz., he must be, in Dewey's view, of scientific disposition. He must possess what Dewey calls "the scientific temper".[2]

Science, as Dewey sees it, plays an ever important role in philosophical criticism. The philosopher, having no special knowledge exclusively his own, relys heavily upon and utilizes knowledge of

---

[1]Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*, p. 4.

[2]Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, pp. 324-325.

fact and principle produced by scientific method, inquiry and discovery. With such knowledge in hand, the task of the philosopher becomes criticism of existing or customary ideas, habits, beliefs, policies, and institutions with regard to their relationship to the good.[3]

In his capacity as critic, the philosopher has two functions to perform: analysis and synthesis. Criticism as analysis is reportorial and transcriptive. Philosophy as critical analysis becomes "a comment on nature and life in the interest of a more intense and just appreciation of the meanings present in experience."[4] The philosopher as critical analyst is judging and he must become a sensitive critic in order that his office may be properly performed. The philosopher when synthesizing his subject-matter is still performing an act of judgment. He, as sensitive and informed critic, uses critical thinking and judgment in an effort to adjust the old, customary, and traditional attitudes and dispositions of man to new "scientific tendencies and political aspirations which are novel and incompatible with received authority."[5]

John Dewey is considered by many to be America's greatest philosopher, liberal educator, and social reformer. Here, we will be mainly concerned with his role as social reformer. How did Dewey come to such a reputation? What were some of the outstanding issues, problems, conflicts, and difficulties in the American scene in which Dewey, the participating liberal philosopher, partook? If philosophy and the

---

[3]Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*, p. 7-8.

[4]Dewey, *Experience and Nature*, p. 407.

[5]Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization*, p. 4.

philosopher are to deal with the most fundamental issues, conflicts and problems of the time and place in an effort to offer solutions by the formulation of generous hypotheses in the form of plans and policies, what were the specific issues, conflicts, and problems that John Dewey, as one of America's great social reformers, actively entertained?

In asking the above questions, one is to keep uppermost in mind Dewey's conception of philosophy. Dewey, being an American by birth and temperament, was primarily concerned with what he conceived to be America's most pressing, urgent, and poignant social issues, conflicts, and problems. Richard Bernstein, for example, talks about the unity, continuity, interdependence in thought and action, character and conduct which Dewey showed where contemporary American social issues were concerned.

> Dewey held that authentic philosophic inquiry arises as a response to the practical conflicts of life, and he proclaimed that philosophy can and ought to be made directly relevant to the "problems of men." Dewey took seriously Plato's portrayal of the philosopher whose highest flight of speculative imagination culminates with a social and practical turn. Dewey's life exhibited the continuity between thought and action; his deepest intellectual convictions were shaped by his experience with the practical affairs of men. Until the end of his life, he sought to bring intelligence and reasonableness to bear on the most poignant social problems.[6]

It is this approach to America's contemporary issues and problems which lend support to the claim that Dewey was America's greatest and most influential liberal philosopher and social reformer. Moreover, in his role as social reformer, Dewey was involved in a number of social issues of his day. The issues that have been selected for scrutiny were chosen due to their impact, importance, and centrality in the American

---

[6]Bernstein, *John Dewey*, p. 7.

social scene. There are four such issues that I wish to consider: (i) the influence of Hull House on the young and impressionable philosopher; (ii) the broadening of the purview of the school to "provide something like a homogeneous and balanced environment for the young"[7] and assimilation of newly arrived urban immigrants into the main stream of the American "race"; (iii) Dewey's activity in the establishment of unions for amelioration of some of the inhumane conditions in which labor toiled; (iv) the fight to save the world for democracy during World War I.

From 1884 to 1894, Dewey taught primarily at the University of Michigan where his thinking, interests, and efforts took a more practical turn to social issues, conflicts, and problems of his time and locale. That is, at Michigan, Dewey became committed to direct involvement with social affairs, a commitment which later gained a more prominent hold upon his life.

During his tenure at Michigan, he established an intimate but fleeting relationship with Franklin Ford. It was Dewey's "wonderful personal experience"[8] with Ford, an economic journalist, that brought to him some new insights into ethical and social matters.

Ford was interested in socio-economic issues and problems, and their cultural manifestations as these arose when an entire nation was in transition from an agrarian to an industrial society. In response to social ills which resulted from accelerated, quantitative, and

---

[7] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 21.

[8] Ralph B. Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, II (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1935), pp. 518-519.

varigated change, Ford was "preaching a new social ideology"[9] which was rooted in the American evangelical tradition, an ideology which was spiritually quasi-religious and messianic.

> Ford rebelled against the moneyed classes who, he claimed, were stiffling the "truth." It is difficult to find coherence in the program he advocated, but he envisioned a blueprint of social revolution led by a vanguard of the "intelligence trust." His weapon for socializing intelligence in the new industrial order would be the written word, and he conceived of a socialist-oriented newspaper that would spread the new gospel. Its editor was to be John Dewey of the philosophy department of the University of Michigan.[10]

The organ of social revolution was given the name *Thought News*. However, it was never published.

Ford's influence was twofold. It centers around "the treatment of the social bearings of science and art."[11] The first instance is seen in Dewey's gaining of "the perception that the true or practical bearing of idealism—that philosophy has been the assertion of the unity of intelligence and the external world *in idea* or subjectively, while if true in idea it must finally secure the conditions of its objective expression."[12] This notion "presages Dewey's break with idealism," his journey "from absolutism to experimentalism."[13]

Secondly, there is a tremendous social movement which "shall demand complete free movement" of "intellectual forces," "and, by

---

[9]Bernstein, *John Dewey*, p. 30.

[10]*Ibid.*

[11]John Dewey, *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics* (Ann Arbor: Register Publishing Company, 1891), p. vii.

[12]Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, II, p. 518.

[13]Morton G. White, *The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 102.

getting their physical leverage in the telegraph and printing press, shall, through free inquiry in a contralized way, demand the authority of all other so-called authorities."[14] Dewey cuts his explanation short. Here we see the prelude to Dewey's preoccupation, which permeated all his later work, "with the social function of intelligence,"[15] "the beginning of Dewey's long crusade for the application of intelligence in social affairs."[16] It is as a result of these influential ideas that Dewey's thought took on a more practical turn in an effort to use philosophy more intelligently as a tool in dealing with practical issues and problems of men. Moreover, the experience with Ford and *Thought News* "evidences his concern to establish the practical social significance of philosophy and stimulated him to re-examine his political and social convictions."[17] It may be said that at Michigan Dewey's thought did take on a more practical turn, however, "the means and end of the social reform were not clearly in focus."[18]

In 1894, Dewey accepted chairmanship of the department of philosophy, psychology, and pedagogy at University of Chicago. It was Chicago that offered an "ideal" environment which would provide necessary challenges and opportunities for merging of Dewey's philosophical interests with those of a more specific and practical social nature.

---

[14] Perry, *The Thought and Character of William James*, II, p. 519.

[15] White, *The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism*, p. 102.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] Bernstein, *John Dewey*, p. 33.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

Chicago, upon Dewey's arrival, approached the paradigm in microcosm of America's recently developing industrial and urban society with attendant economic and social evils. The two agencies in Chicago which provided Dewey with data in the form of facts which were needed to foster his consuming interest in social reform were Hull House and the Laboratory School. More specifically, Chicago and Hull House provided social facts that underlay issues and problems of a city and society rapidly becoming urban and industrial. Dewey's Laboratory School was where the method of problem-solution was experimentally applied.

1. Hull House

Hull House, "a settlement house for social work among immigrant working men,"[19] was Chicago's center for social dissent and dissenters: radicals, anarchists, workers, and the like. Dewey's "non-professional" association with Hull House brought him into "contact with many types of persons"[20] and left a deep and lasting impression on his thought.

Since Dewey has often stated that forces which have influenced him most "have come from persons and situations more than from books,"[21] it would seem most instructive to look at Hull House's socialized and democratic way of life and its possible socio-environmental influence upon Dewey's subsequent thought and activity.

There were four areas where residents of Hull House concentrated their energies: (i) providing social services for foreign immigrants--

---

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 36.

[20] Jane M. Dewey, "Biography of John Dewey," *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, ed. by P. A. Schilpp (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1939), p. 29,

[21] Dewey, "From Absolutism to Experimentalism," p. 13.

Irish, German, Russian-Jews, Italians, Greeks, and other immigrants from southern and eastern Europe; (ii) the Americanization of these foreign born immigrants and their children; (iii) union activities for benefit of immigrant workingmen; and (iv) providing "socialized" education for all who came to Hull House as residents, recipients or visitors.

The residents of Hull House were forever active in ameliorating social evils. Hull House's numerous organizations illuminate its function as social center. The social services provided by Hull House were many and "no effort that might contribute to human betterment went untried; their cause was nothing less than the total regeneration of society."[22] Some of their efforts gained international attention and influence.

As was stated earlier, Hull House was a social center for the expressed purpose of assisting immigrant workingmen and their families in their efforts to assimilate into the mainstream of American culture. One such effort was the attempt at Americanization of these foreigners who for the most part had come in search of the American "dream." They were as a lot mostly agrarian, illiterate and had no conception of American culture with its "democratic" base.

Hull House's efforts at Americanization of immigrants were nothing new to the American scene. The problem of Americanization arose just prior to the Civil War. The inculcation, assimilation, and education of immigrants was one of the first responsibilities of public schooling.

As immigration occurred in stages, there was a profound change in its pattern during the latter decades of the nineteenth century. This

---

[22]Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), pp. 60-61.

shift caused a new wave of energy for purposes of Americanizing incoming immigrants. The former white European found the character of new immigrants reprehensible, to say the least: "There was no room in the United States for 'hypenated' Americans."[23] The work of Ellwood P. Cubberley, a professor at Stanford, symbolizes attitudes of those who advocated "the view that to Americanize was to Anglicize."[24] Cremin gives the following account of Cubberley's position which was not the least a minority one.

> The southern and eastern Europeans, Cubberley declared, were essentially different from the immigrants who had preceded them. "Illiterate, docile, lacking in self-reliance and initiative and not possessing the Anglo-Teutonic conceptions of law, order, and government, their coming has served to dilute tremendously our national stock, and to corrupt our civic life." The first task of education, he concluded, was break up these ghettos, "to assimilate and amalgamate these people as a part of our American race, and to implant in their children, so far as can be done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law and order, and popular government, and to awaken in them a reverence for our democratic institutions and for those things in our national life which we as a people hold to be of abiding worth." To Americanize, in this view, was to divest the immigrant of his ethnic character and to inculcate the dominant Anglo-Saxon morality. Americanization meant taking on the ways and beliefs of those who embodied the true, historic America, the America worth preserving.[25]

Jane Addams and other Hull House residents were true believers in the social and moral meaning of democracy, so they claimed.[26] Politically, democracy is merely a special form of democracy. It is a mere but important means to social and moral ends which can only come about through democratic and diversified humane experience.

---

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

[25] *Ibid.*. pp. 67-68.

[26] Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1902), p. 6-7.

Theory and practice do not always coincide. The above statement or claim by Jane Addams seems to be a mere theoretical formulation. She believed whole-heartedly in social adjustment of the alien poor, and problems arose as a result of their "process" of Americanization. The paternalistic attitude of Jane Addams and other Hull House residents were tempered by the notion of Anglo-conformity: "Quite consciously the Hull-House residents tried to teach middle-class values to the immigrant, and they rarely allowed the poor to participate in planning settlement activities."[27]

At Hull House one unconsciously became involved in labor movement activity. Union activity was continuous and at all times permeating the atmosphere where many socialist and unionist attended meetings to discuss the plight of the worker. There were many personalities and visitors who were famous for unionist or socialistic activities: Sidney and Beatrice Webb, H. G. Wells, Florence Kelley, Henry Demarest Lloyd, Mary Kenny O'Sullivan, and others. Henry Demarest Lloyd, Clarence Darrow, and Ethelbert Steward were in great demand as speakers due to their expertise concerning union matters. I should like to briefly point to the activities of Henry Demarest Lloyd.

Henry Lloyd was but one of many people who contributed time, money, and expert advice to residents and immigrants of Hull House. Lloyd was one of the first American muckrakers. His book *Wealth Against Commonwealth*, became one of the most influential on muckraking activities.

Lloyd's contribution to Hull House's labor activities consisted

---

[27]Allen F. Davis and Mary Lynn McCree, eds., *Eighty Years at Hull House* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969), p. 7.

primarily in three things: (i) he frequently spoke at union meetings as a resource person; (ii) he added professional weight in passing legislation which reformed Chicago's notorious sweating system; (iii) and upon declining the position of state factory inspector, he recommended that the position be given to a Hull House resident, Florence Kelley.

From its inception, Hull House was in the business of education. Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr, founders of Hull House, believed in democratic and universal education for all, children and adult alike. Jane Addams, in particular, drew the distinction between informal and formal education. Informal education occurred by means of social interaction within the socio-cultural environment. Formal education consisted in that particular and somewhat limited experience which one receives within the context of a prepared environment set aside especially for its educative effect.

At Hull House, formal education took on two forms: (i) a formal and experimental kindergarten and (ii) adult education for those of all ages, young and old. Moreover, there was education for young children and adolescents. The young children and adolescents "were organized into groups which were not quite classes and not quite clubs. The value of these groups consisted almost entirely in arousing a higher imagination and in giving the child the opportunity which they could not have in the crowded schools, for initiative and for independent social relationships."[28]

---

[28]Jane Addams, "First Days at Hull-House," *Eighty Years at Hull-House*, pp. 27-28.

These attempts at formal education evolved around Jane Addams' notion that the "social settlement is a protest against a restricted view of education,"[29] meaning that education in its traditional sense--curriculum and methodology--had very little, if any, significance for relating life-styles of immigrants to realities of a society rapidly becoming industrial and urban.[30] This "socialized" approach to educating immigrant workingmen and women and their children led Cremin to proclaim that Jane Addams provided "the spiritual nub of progressive education."[31]

Jane Addams and Ellen Gates Starr moved into Hull House on the 18th of September 1889. The Hull House experimental kindergarten was instituted in October of the same year. It was Hull House's "first organized undertaking."[32] The faculty of Hull House's educational center was continually experimenting and developing their educational philosophy. With the institution of its experimental kindergarten, Hull House unconsciously became a pioneer and leader in progressive education.

> Hull-House residents had some success in improving the public schools in Chicago, but their major influence and contribution were their educational experiments. These were observed, accepted, and reported by a frequent Hull-House visitor, John Dewey. . . . Though Dewey gave an occasional lecture at Hull-House and served on the first board of trustees of the settlement, often he just dropped in to meet and talk to the interesting people who always seemed to gather there.[33]

---

[29]Davis and McCree, *Eighty Years at Hull-House*, p. 96.

[30]Cremin, *The Transformation of The School*, p. 61.

[31]*Ibid.*, p. ix.

[32]Addams, "First Days at Hull-House," p. 26.

[33]Davis and McCree, *Eighty Years at Hull-House*, p. 96.

One of Hull House's first formal educational efforts was education of immigrant workingmen: "We were very insistent that the Settlement should not be primarily for the children, and that it was absurd to suppose that grown people would not respond to opportunities for education and social life."[34]

2. The Progressive Education Movement

The progressive education movement represented a response to industrial America, a response to industrialism immediately after the Civil War. It began as a means of implementing the "American dream."

> Actually, progressive education began as part of a vast humanitarian effort to apply the promise of American life--the ideals of government by, of, and for the people--to the puzzling new urban-industrial civilization that came into being during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The word 'progressive' provides the clue to what it really was: the educational phase of American Progressivism writ large. In effect, progressive education began as Progressivism in education: a many-sided effort to use the schools to improve the lives of individuals.[35]

Although being "a many-sided effort," there were at least four areas where there was broad agreement amongst the progressives. Cremin in his book, *The Transformation of the School*, states the four primary objectives of progressive education: (i) "broadening the program and function of the school to include direct concern for health, vocation, and the quality of family and community life," (ii) "applying in the classroom the pedagogical principles derived from new scientific research in psychology and the social sciences," (iii) "tailoring instruction more and more to the different kinds and classes of children who were being brought within the purview of the school,"[36] and

---

[34] Addams, "First Days at Hull-House," p. 28.

[35] Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*, pp. viii-ix.

[36] *Ibid.*

(iv) "implied the radical faith that culture could be democratized without being vulgarized, the faith that everyone could share not only in the benefits of the new sciences but in the pursuit of the arts as well."[37] Moreover, Cremin often refers to the "spiritual nub" as stated by Jane Addams as that which gives direction to the progressive movement in education.

As was stated earlier, Hull House's educational experiences and experiments began with its inception in 1889. Dewey, one of Hull House's most famous "guest", did not arrive in Chicago until the year 1894. He was unknown in the area of education. He had taken the job at Chicago solely on his reputation as a philosopher, and "the decade which followed saw the research and experiment in education which won for its initiator a world-wide reputation."[38] However, shortly after his arrival, Dewey became a frequent observer of Hull House's democratic and socialized way of life. He paid particular note to its experimental kindergarten and adult education programs. It was after many visits to Hull House that Dewey set up his famous Laboratory School. Undoubtedly the influence of Hull House's experimental kindergarten and other experiments in socialized living and education had a tremendous effect upon the then unknown Dewey. Dewey readily and often praised the educational innovations which occurred at Hull-House; he went so far as to say that Hull House was the paradigm for what the school should eventually become.[39] Richard Bernstein points to the fact that

---

[37] *Ibid*.

[38] S. J. Curtis and M. E. A. Boultwood, *A Short History of Educational Ideas* (London: University Tutorial Press, Ltd., 1953), p. 464.

[39] Davis and McCree, *Eighty Years at Hull-House*, p. 96.

> provided him with the "facts" that he had spoken about in his defense of *Thought News*. . . . Dewey was welcomed by the Jane Addams circle because he could bring the theory and methods of social philosophy to bear on the concrete facts. This was the very "exchange" that Dewey hoped to realize. Under the impact of the experiences at Hull House, Dewey's social philosophy became articulated and more specific.[40]

There is little evidence, written or otherwise, that Dewey had an equally reciprocal influence on Hull House residents. Where experimental and progressive education was concerned, it is safe to assume that Hull House's experiment in socialized education, especially its experimental and progressive kindergarten, influenced Dewey's thought prior to the founding of his Laboratory School.

What makes Dewey a progressive? What did he contribute to a movement that was already becoming fruitful? Dewey voiced several complaints against the traditions and obstacles which he thought were hindrances to social progressivism: he blamed industrialism for the ferment in education; changes in the nature of production had, in his view, disrupted and brought about changes in society affecting all institutions, including the school.

Dewey believed that the older traditional and "socialized" education that took place in the social environment of an earlier age was no longer effective because of changes in social relations. Formerly, such education provided for character-building and discipline which were now lacking in our highly industrialized society. Accordingly, he suggested that the school must take on "educational functions traditionally carried on by family, neighborhood, or shop which are no longer

---

[40] Bernstein, *John Dewey*, p. 37.

being performed by the community writ large."[41] In other words, the school must become an ideal and miniature society providing for those activities lost to antiquity.

The school must then take over the responsibility of functions which the family, neighborhood or job can no longer perform. However, in order to adequately perform such responsibility the school must undergo a transformation similar in nature to that social relations underwent due to the impact of radical industrial change. That is to say, since society changes, the school must keep in step with such change to maintain socio-cultural relevance. That such a transformation was needed was attested to by modifications which were in his view merely the treating of symptoms, instead of eliminating undesirable and basic causes. The need, he urged, was for radical social reform, and this called for rearrangement of root causes, that is, a reconstruction of basic and fundamental principles and values.

Dewey, indeed, wanted to "tailor" "instruction more and more to the different kinds and classes of children who were being brought within the purview of the school."[42] In an effort to bring this notion to pass, he recognized the pluralistic nature of the American society.

Dewey believed in the Americanization of the less fortunate white immigrant into the mainstream of the American society--a melting-pot syndrome for whites only. This is consistent with Dewey's socio-cultural background at Burlington, Vermont. There were immigrants who were continually assimilated into the mainstream of the community's

---

[41]John Dewey, *The School and Society*, revised edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 12.

[42]Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*, p. viii.

socio-cultural environment. At Burlington, blacks were out of the question, mentally and physically, where assimilation into the mainstream was considered. Furthermore, there were few, if any, blacks at Burlington, Hull House or the University of Chicago where Dewey ran his Laboratory School. At Hull House, it was a known fact that blacks were not welcomed and were turned away for fear of distracting from the efforts of residents trying to Americanize poor white European illiterates. Its residents turned away from white America's black problem as is seen in their attempt to set up a "separate but equal" social settlement for blacks some distance from Hull House. They were in the business of servicing the needs of white European immigrants, a business in which they didn't want "niggers" to interfere.

> Hull-House was surrounded by a shifting ethnic mixture of people, but there were never many Negro families in the neighborhood. Those few blacks who did appear at a Hull-House club or class were not always welcomed warmly, for though Hull-House was not exactly segregated many of its residents felt that the presence of Negroes might discourage other groups from coming. The settlement seemed unwilling to come to grips with the "Negro problem" in its own environs, yet Hull-House was willing to be concerned with the same "problem" elsewhere in the city. A group of residents helped found the Wendell Phillips Settlement in a black district on the West Side.[43]

Hull House is where Dewey learned the "facts" of urban-industrial life. He stated that the Hull House experiment in socialized education was what every school should become. If Dewey accepted this in principle it is safe to assume that the probability of black students or staff at his world-famous Laboratory School was nil.

Even where white immigrants were concerned, when Dewey speaks of a "common subject matter" which "accustoms all to a unity of outlook

---

[43]Davis and McCree, *Eighty Years at Hull-House*, p. 121.

upon a broader horizon than is visible to the members of any group while it is isolated",[44] and of the social environment as a means of balancing "the various elements in the social environment" so as "to see to it that each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born, and to come into living contact with a broader environment," he is negating to a large degree his own principles of democratic participation by all in the decision-making processes which influence the formation of a common socio-cultural environment.[45] The "common subject matter," the "unity of outlook," and the environment to which the isolated individual is to "escape" is that of the dominant group (WASP) to which Dewey belonged. Questions as to What common subject matter? What unity of outlook? Assimilation into what? become both futile and irrelevant.

Finally, Dewey shared the progressive's faith that "culture could be democratized without being vulgarized, the faith that everyone could not only share in the benefits of the new sciences but in the pursuit of the arts as well."[46] This may be seen in Dewey's acceptance of Jane Addams' notion of democracy as a way of life. Democracy was and is more than a political form. It is a way of life which possesses a moral meaning that requires associated living in conjoint communicative experience.

In the voicing of the above views and similar ones, the writings of Dewey "provides the key to what is progressive about progressive

---

[44] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, pp. 20-21.

[45] *Ibid.*

[46] Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*, p. ix.

education."[47]

The Progressive Education Association was founded in 1919 as an organ for implementing the educational theories or concepts of Pestalozzi, Froebel, Parker, and Dewey. Cremin thinks that the Progressive Education Association's efforts in all probability had an effect which was more distructive than constructive. Although the fate of progressive education as an education movement was "inextricably wedded"[48] to the Progressive Association, Dewey never joined the Association, and accepted the position of honorary president only after the death of its first honorary president, Charles W. Eliot. However, in the beginning, Dewey acted as interpreter and synthesizer of the movement, but in time became one of its most severe critics. It is interesting to note that he accepted the honorary presidency of an association at a time when he was highly critical of the same.

3. John Dewey and Unionism

During the course of World War I attitudes and hopes were generated along with objectives and plans for their actualization in an effort to issue in a more humane society. One such comprehensive objective which called for an effective social reorganization was that of socio-economic relations within nations. The call was for an effective economic reorganization which would provide steady and useful work for all members of society.

Dewey was one of the chief supporters of the call. His interest was stimulated by three inherent evils of the existing socio-economic

---

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] *Ibid.*, p. 241.

system in its relationship to those employed in American industry and business: (i) the failure to provide steady and useful employment; (ii) the degraded and inhuman standard of living that most workers "enjoyed"; (iii) defects in efficiency and distribution of production. These are highly interrelated aspects and will be considered somewhat more fully in Chapter IV. What concerns us here will be the first evil, that is, the failure of the economic regime to provide steady and useful employment. Dewey is firmly convinced of the necessity of economics as instrumental means in fashioning the good life.

The problem of unemployment is inherent in the existing economic regime, and its constant use of science and technology to improve mechanical means of production. The present economic formula is based upon the profit motive which calls for restriction of productive capacity according to supply-and-demand. In other words, workers are bought and sold according to the needs of the capitalist.

Dewey seems to be a firm believer in the doctrine espoused by Marx that forces of production to a large extent determine social relations. He writes:

> That physical science and its conclusions do as matter of fact exercise an enormous influence upon social conditions need not be argued. Technological developments are the direct result of applications of physical science. These technological applications have profound and extensive consequences upon human relations. Change in methods of production, distribution, and communication is the chief determining condition of social relationships and to a large extent, of actual cultural values in every advanced industrial people.[49]

America's existing industrial regime operates on ideas, attitudes, principles, and values that were established in pre-scientific,

---

[49]Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, p. 489.

pre-industrial, and nominally democratic times. These pre-scientific attitudes and dispositions are the dominant factors in social control of industrial and economic matters. These ideas are being transmitted through the educative effects of the social environment: informally and most effectively, through social intercourse; formally, through the use of schools as specially prepared environments.

The dominant values are traditional and customarily static and have not evolved with the prime mover of social change and value: industrial and technological advancement brought on by increased use of scientific methodology. This is the source of present conflicts and uncertainties.[50]

Traditional institutions and habits are hostile to ideas that are progressive, truly democratic and liberal. Unfortunately, they are the dominating values which control social progress in things economical, political, educational, and moral. The laissez-faire school of economics and its interests are the main obstacles which prevent true liberty and equality in matters of social import.

As concerns employment, the first demand of any social order worthy of the name is to guarantee the right to every capable individual to work. Every individual should have the opportunity to engage in some form of useful activity. If this can't be provided for by the existing economic order, then it must be superseded.[51]

One means of providing for steady and useful employment is that of

---

[50] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 75.

[51] John Dewey, "The Economic Basis of the New Society," *Intelligence in the Modern World*, ed. with an Introduction by Joseph Ratner. (New York: Modern Library, 1939), p. 421.

unionization of those employed in industry and business; it would seem that this view grew out of Dewey's Hull House experience. He looked upon unionization as a democratic means of control of industry and business by trades and occupations. He, further, considered this a necessary form of social control for the eradication of other evils inherent in the existing economic regime.

Dewey, through the use of unionization, is seeking "greater industrial autonomy"[52] for the worker; that is, a greater share in the decision-making process should be obtained as a means to democratic advancement of economic institutions. When Dewey speaks of greater industrial autonomy, he, in fact, means

> greater ability on the part of the workers in any particular trade or occupation to control that industry, instead of working under these conditions of external control where they have no interest, no insight into what they are doing, and no social outlook upon the consequences and meaning of what they are doing. This means an increasing share given to the laborer, to the wage earner, in controlling the conditions of his own activity.[53]

Democratic means of control of industry and business brings forth democratic ends in terms of employment and distribution of profits. "Means used determine the ends actually reached. The end justifies the means only when the means used are such as actually bring about the desired and desirable end."[54]

Since the material is instrumental to the good life and must be secured as a means to individual liberation, how does one wrest the economic power from those in control of the existing regime? How does one reorder, transform an existing industrial order which has the

---

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 422.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 432.

sanction of custom, and create a more democratically controlled society which can secure equality and liberty to the masses? Education is the answer: informal and formal. It is education in the form of schooling which "has been largely utilized as a convenient tool of the existing nationalistic and economic regimes," and it will be "the chief means of continuous, graded economical improvement and social rectification" through "utilizing the opportunities of educating the young to modify prevailing types of thought and desires."[55] Speaking of the desired transformation, Dewey says:

> Success or failure in its realization depends more upon the adoption of educational methods calculated to effect the change than upon anything else. For the change is essentially a change in the quality of mental disposition--an educative change. This does not mean that we can change character and mind by direct instruction and exhortation, apart from a change in industrial and political conditions. Such a conception contradicts our basic idea that character and mind are attitudes of participative response in social affairs. But it does mean that we may produce in schools a projection in type of the society we should like to realize, and by forming minds in accord with it gradually modify the larger and more recalcitrant features of adult society.[56]

As the school becomes the chief formal agency for practical social reform, we see Dewey's particular concern and interest in the formal use of education and its possibilities as a means of instilling desirable attitudes toward economic matters. The "proper" education of the young--the future workers--is a social necessity for "there are possibilities resident in the education of the young which have never yet been taken advantage of."[57] The educative development of the young may not be "the only way in which the life of impulse may be employed to

---

[55] Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 127.

[56] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, pp. 316-317.

[57] Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, pp. 127-128.

effect social ameliorations, but it is the least expensive and most orderly."[58]

Future workers should be educated so that there will be a unity of disposition concerning economic matters. Workers should join in democratic social union which will provide for direct participation in control of industrial-economic pursuits that are at present controlled by external and autocratic sources for means of pecuinary profits of the few.

Dewey helped in the founding of two teachers unions: The Teachers Union of the City of New York--Local 5 of the American Federation of Teachers--and the American Association of University Professors. The formation of these unions took place during the war years, 1914-1918. Dewey seems to have taken more pride in being a member of the AFT than the American Association of University Professors. Why did Dewey join the AFT, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor (AFL)? What did the AFT offer Dewey that other teacher associations did not? What did he see as the aims and purposes of unions, particularly teachers unions?

In an article entitled "Why I Am a Member of the Teachers Union," Dewey gives answers to the aforementioned questions. Dewey looks upon teacher unions to provide leadership in all areas of education, formal and informal. The teachers union should animate "everything that is progressive and straightforward that concerns teachers."[59] It is to be an association of men and women possessed of certain ainimating "spirit" in the conducting of its affairs.

Politically speaking, teacher unions are to be organized along

---

[58] *Ibid.*

[59] *Ibid.*

national, regional, and local lines. They are to be militant, aggressive, and energetic when attempting to accomplish their goals. Organization for academic purposes are part of its function. Not only is its function to "protect and aid those who are members of it" where the "discussions of topics of academic interest are concerned as well as discussions of improvement in subject matter taught and in methods of teaching is involved,"[60] it has purposes and aims which have broader political, economic, and social significance. Therefore, they should be organized not only for the academic purposes but for aggressively pursuing the aims, goals and policies of the union membership. Organization for academic purposes are necessary but that is not all. A teachers' union must organize for definite practical purposes. It must consciously and courageously entertain the questions "that other academic organizations are likely to dodge."[61]

Economically, Dewey is non-apologetic in stating that one of the specific reasons for his joining the AFT is "that it does emphasize the economic aspect of the teaching profession."[62] Moreover, it becomes a necessity for teachers to control the economic purse-strings of educational institutions. This is necessary for two reasons: (i) the educational institution, if it seeks a certain degree of political autonomy, cannot be divorced from the consuming interest which is dominant in society; (ii) those who control the economic basis of an institution control its government.[63]

---

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] *Ibid.*

[62] *Ibid.*, p. 4.

[63] *Ibid.*

Socially, not only should the teacher unions protect the child against external and negative socio-environmental influences, they are to entertain "the important, practical issues of the day." Teachers must organize to carry out a definite program of work, instead of mere academic discussions of subject matter and methods. Dewey goes on to list the "firsts" of the AFT to give examples of what other unions could do: (i) "first teachers' organization to protest against the Lusk Law"; (ii) "the first organization to protest against the bills introduced in the Legislature which would involve a censorship of history teaching"; (iii) "the first teachers' organization to protest against the prostitution of American Educational Week to militaristic purposes."[64] Thus, Dewey whole-heartedly supported the militant, energetic, and aggressive activity on the part of the members of the AFT in addressing themselves to the important and practical issues of the day, the kinds of issues that other teacher associations were likely to shy away from. He goes on to condemn those teachers who do not join militant, aggressive unions that do "a great deal more than protect and aid those who are members of it." The teacher should not be a snob, a "snobbery (which) is back of a considerable part of the objections to teachers unions and to their federation with other bodies of working men and working women." Moreover, "if our programs of study in our schools are still too academic and too pedantic, too remote from contact with life, it is largely because the educators, administrators and the teachers are themselves so far remote from the actual problems of life as they are met by the great mass of the population."[65]

---

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] *Ibid.*

By remaining too remote from the everyday work-world and its pressing, urgent problems, teachers, says Dewey, are perpetuating weaknesses of the traditional educational system. Teachers unions in order to be relevant in the area of social reform must come into contact with other labor unions in an effort to understand their difficulties.

> If all teachers were within the Teachers Union and if they were not merely-like myself--here I am making a confession which is not in my subject--somewhat nominal members who try to keep their dues paid, but active working members who came into contact with the labor unions, with the working men of the country and their problems, I am sure that more would be done to reform and improve our education, and to put into execution the ideas and ideals written about and talked about by progressive educators and reformers than by any other one cause whatsoever, if not more than by all other causes together.[66]

Dewey looked forward to the day when the question asked by future members of teacher unions will be Why should I not join the teachers' union?

Dewey, while confessing that he was nothing more than a nominal member of Local 5, did not live up to the democratic principles of the constitution which he helped formulate nor to the principle that working members should be militant, aggressive, energetic pursuers of educational and social reform. This can readily be seen as he participated in the "tragedy" of Local 5 which exploded in 1935 after many years of fermentation.

The tragedy of Local 5 consisted in the gradual transformation of power from the old-guard to which Dewey belonged to a smaller active, militant, radical, and aggressive group working within the liberal constitution which the old-guard had, in fact, instituted. The old-guard representing the traditional and customary positions of the status quo

---

[66] *Ibid.*

became upset by the loss of power to the young and dynamic radicals, who comprised approximately 10 per cent of the membership. As a result, the old-guard, who claimed to represent more than 90 per cent membership in the union, challenged its own constitution and took action to change its constitutional base so as to oust those they thought were threatening the status quo.[67] The old-guard tried to "settle" the internal dispute; however, when that failed, they took "their" grievance to the national office in hopes of a favorable response.

The national office set up a fact finding committee to investigate the grievance of the majority membership. The committee declared that the old-guard was responsible for violating the very constitution which it had instituted. The majority membership were obstructionist to the union's functioning under its democratic and liberal constitution. The aggressive and militant minority membership were "not free to formulate its own policies but was subject to political force which is itself fundamentally opposed to basic principles for which the union stands."[68]

Dewey and cohorts, still not satisfied with the national executive council's fact finding mission, decided to pursue the matter further by taking the issue before the national convention of 1935 at Cleveland in an attempt to revoke the existing charter so that the majority membership of Local 5 could form a new local. Dewey and his cohorts were defeated as they could not raise the required two-thirds vote necessary

---

[67] Commission on Educational Reconstruction, *Organizing the Teaching Profession* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1955), p. 236.

[68] *Ibid.*

to revoke a local's charter.[69] The Commission on Educational Reconstruction, itself representing that which is traditional and customary, gives this seemingly biased account of the voting.

> The question came before the convention at Cleveland on the motion to revoke the charter of Local 5. Local 5's own delegates urged its adoption. Every local but one which had been in the AFT for more than three years voted to grant Local 5's request to revoke the charter so that they might start afresh. Delegates from new locals, however, voted as a block solidly against revocation. They did not have the background; they simply opposed "cracking down" on "liberals," which they deemed the New York obstructionist to be.[70]

It is very interesting to note a consistent pattern in Dewey's direct political and social dealings with active, aggressive, demanding, and somewhat courageous minorities which strongly oppose domination by a hostile majority. When such a minority, working completely within the rights of a prescribed constitution, does not accept the views or values of the majority, and hold their position in the face of strong opposition, he labels them a "recalcitrant minority" and recommends the use of force if necessary to suppress them.

Moreover, it is of further interest to note that during the same year of the fiasco Dewey published his book *Liberalism and Social Action*. There is a passage which speaks directly to the active, aggressive, demanding, and militant minority--"recalcitrant minority."

> . . . it is permissible to look with considerable suspicion upon those who assert that suppression of democracy is the road to the adequate establishment of genuine democracy. The one exception--and that apparant rather than real--to dependence upon organized intelligence as the method for directing social change is found when society through an authorized majority has entered upon the path of social experimentation leading to great social change, and a minority refuses by force to permit the method of intelligent action to go into effect. Then force may be

---

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 237.

[70] *Ibid.*

> intelligently employed to subdue and disarm the recalcitrant minority.[71]

Although addressing himself to the union movement in general and being a member of a union in particular, Dewey's efforts were of little effect in reforming the union in which he was a member not to mention unions in general. Mark Starr in his article "Organized Labor and the Dewey Philosophy" gives this description of Dewey's philosophical relevance to the union movement and his influence upon their policies and functions.

> Dewey's philosophy in education has an obvious importance for organized labor. Because the trade unions originated out of deep social needs and are themselves a collective effort to meet those basic economic needs by a major section of the community, the implications of Dewey's theories to the ideals and actions of the unions should be examined.

However,

> It would, of course, be a mistake to think that there has been a reciprocal interest and a wide conscious study of the philosophy of John Dewey in the ranks of American organized labor, or even in the workers' education section of its activities.[72]

4. World War I

At first, as concerns the collective American attitude toward the First World War, there was very little interest in any participation on the part of the American people. In the decade prior to 1914, America and its people were bombarded with propaganda for peace as perhaps no other nation. The propaganda was persistent and successful. The mood of America was one of peace, so to speak, and the European

---

[71] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 87.

[72] Mark Starr, "Organized Labor and the Dewey Philosophy," in *John Dewey: Philosopher of Science and Freedom*, ed. by Sidney Hook (New York: Dial Press, 1950), pp. 184-185.

War was looked upon by many "as the supreme stupidity." Americans on the surface "were the preservers of sanity in a world that has gone mad." Furthermore, President Woodrow Wilson expressed the sentiments of the average American in stating that the war was "over there."[73] The position of the American people was supposedly one of unqualified neutrality.

War came to America. It was declared on April 2, 1917. According to Dewey, the masses had erroneously read the movement of events. This misreading of events was especially noticeable among young men of war age who suffered from moral purity and lack of sophistication in matters of morality: "For at the very worst most of these young people appear to be victims of a moral innocency and an inexpertness which have been engendered by the moral training which they have undergone."[74] Furthermore, Dewey believed that many people suffered a moral crisis due to their "difficulty in identifying the conventional and the popular with the right and good."[75] Dewey had given the issue careful consideration, having subscribed to the same principles in the earlier period of the war.

It was under the skillful leadership of President Wilson that the needed shift in morality came as a means of justification of the "passage from friendly neutrality to participation in war." Wilson created "the belief that just because the pacific moral impulse retained all

---

[73]John Dewey, "Conscience and Compulsion," in *Character and Events*, ed., with an Introduction, by Joseph Ratner, II (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929), p. 576.

[74]*Ibid.*, p. 578.

[75]*Ibid.*p. 577.

its validity Germany must be defeated in order that it find full fruition."[76] This attitude--the saving of the world for democracy--became the chief stimuli to all of Dewey's efforts in support of the war. He saw the war in terms of a moral issue to be consummated.

In 1916, Dewey contributed an essay to *The New Republic* entitled "Force, Violence and Law." The article expresses, in advance, his philosophy toward war. His central theme, which is "the acute question of social philosophy," is the question "What is force and what are we going to do with it?"[77] Meanings of the term "force" are many and in some instances have somewhat opposite social connotations: "Force figures in different roles."[78]

For Dewey, force is power and "the only thing which effects anything."[79] Force is energy and energy may be applied to various uses; energy is power that can be used as coercion or constraint in an effort toward the achievement of ends. Violence, an extreme form of coercion, is "force running wild." Furthermore, Dewey objects to violence because it is force used in a wasteful, idle and distructive manner.

Dewey sees law as a means of regulating force. It is a means "of regulating the expenditure of force which will avoid the waste incident to present methods."[80] Laws are methods which should regulate force in as economically and as efficient a manner as possible in realizing

---

[76] *Ibid.*

[77] Dewey, "Force, Violence and Law," in *Character and Events*, II, p. 637.

[78] *Ibid.*, p. 638.

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 637.

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 638.

desired consequences. A law unites forces into "a plan for organizing otherwise independent and potentially conflicting energies into a scheme which avoids waste, a scheme allowing a maximum utilization of energy."[81]

Moreover, Dewey feels "that since one cannot walk the streets without using force, the only question which persons can discuss with one another concerns the most effective use of force in gaining ends in specific situations."[82] It is in this line of argument that Dewey gives his support to the war effort.

Force is a means of securing results, consequences, desirable or undesirable. The pacifist failed to recognize force in its positive, efficient, and economical state as a means to the desired and desirable.[83] War springs from objective causes or forces that come into conflict with one another. These conflicts arise from "specific defects in the organization of the energies of men in society" and can be resolved only "by the discovery of a new social arrangement."[84] Accordingly, war becomes a means for the realization of this end or consequence. It is to become an effective, economical, and efficient means of realizing specific results.

What were these ends to which World War I was to be a means? In other words, what were the ends to which efficient use of force was to be used? The ends were basically twofold: (i) "the establishment of a system of international law that would ensure peaceful relations

---

[81] *Ibid.*

[82] *Ibid.*

[83] *Ibid.*, p. 640.

[84] *Ibid.*, p. 639.

between nations,"[85] and (ii) the reorganization of social and economic relations within nations. Here we are mainly concerned with the former end or objective; the latter objective will be discussed at a later stage.

What role could America play in such a world crisis? That is to say, what forces could America bring to secure specific and desirable results? Dewey is concerned that American should add its forces--moral, economic, financial, and military--to the collective forces of other nations which are its allies in an effort to establish a system of international law with a democratic political form. First, it would be instructive to look at the moral responsibility America had in entering the war on the side of the allies, that is, as Dewey saw it.

Concerning matters of moral import, Dewey was an enlightened imperialist. His moral claim is that when the future is taken into account, there is one nation--that to which he belongs--whose desires, when satisfied, will bring more satisfaction to future generations than those of any other nation. For Dewey, the nation in question is America and the doctrine he advocates justifies America's entry into the war as a morally superior nation. Thus, in pursuing America's own aims, the American people are pursuing the general good of all.

What makes America morally superior? And what are its responsibilities as a result of being morally superior? America is morally superior to Europeans and the rest of the Old World primarily due to three causes: (i) geographical location, (ii) the incorporation and assimilation of different classes, ethnics, and races into a viable and

---

[85] Dewey, "The Economic Basis of the New Society," p. 416.

moral federation, and (iii) the American "idea" or "experience."

Geographical location had blessed America in that the days of its growth took place in relative neutrality from the evil forces of Europe. However, America is now a great nation-state which is "able to confer with the nations of the world on equal terms." America, politically and economically, "is now in the world." A world where "the affairs and interest of one nation" is "the concern of all."[86]

America's major and long-term contributions to the world of peace which is waiting to be delivered are to be made in politics and morality. This is in no way a slight of America's contributions to the war effort militarily or economically; they are important. However, America's lasting contributions are to be those of a moral and political nature.

According to Dewey, "what is morally at stake is a conflict of ideas and idealizations inherited from fedualism with those which express the transition to a democratic ordering of life."[87] America is morally superior due to its not being affected by the immorality of "other nations longer in the world."[88] Jealousies, intrigues, and hostilities which plague other nations are not seen in any measurable degree in America. This has been made possible because America has "been, as it were, a laboratory set aside from the rest of the world in which to make, for its benefit, a great social experiment. The war, the removal of the curtain of isolation, means that this period is over."[89]

---

[86]Dewey, "America and the World," in *Character and Events*, p. 642.

[87]Dewey, "The League of Nations and the New Diplomacy," in *Character and Events*, p. 606.

[88]Dewey, "America and the World," pp. 642-643.

[89]*Ibid.*, p. 644.

European countries are to be influenced by the American idea and not vice versa. Moreover, Dewey believed this notion should dictate the tenor of all negotiations for peace, the notion that America is a great idea and it is America's responsibility "to lead the world to see what this idea means as a model for its own future well-being."[90]

According to Dewey, "the two greatest positive social achievements of America"[91] are (i) federation and (ii) the release of cultural interests from political dictation and control. These two accomplishments are the center-posts to the American idea of moral democracy which abounds with liberty, equality, and justice for all.

The political and racial problems that now plague the Old World have been worked out in America: "the rights of nationalities which are included within larger political units."[92] The problem was solved in America by means of separating ethnic nationality from that of citizenship. This prompts Dewey to claim that America and Americans

> are truly interracial and international in our own internal constitution. The very peoples and races who are taught in the Old World that they have an instinctive and ineradicable antipathy to one another live here side by side, in comity, often in hearty amity. We have become a peace-loving nation both because there are no strong powers close to our borders and because the diversified elements of our people have meant hope, opportunity, release of virile powers from subjection to dread, for use in companionship and unconstrained rivalries. Our uncoerced life has been at liberty to direct itself into channels of toleration, a general spirit of live and let live.[93]

Politically, Dewey sees America as a federation of differing classes, ethnics, and racial groups. It is a federation "where the

---

[90] *Ibid.*

[91] *Ibid.*, p. 643.

[92] *Ibid.*

[93] *Ibid.* p. 644.

unity does not destroy the many but maintain each constituent factor in full vigor."[94] This process of federation did not happen by chance or accident. Design was called into play; natural and unconscious design. America's successful federation springs from the efficient social organization of forces in the scene.

> It is no accident that the conceptions of a world federation, a concert of nations, a supreme tribunal, a league of nations to enforce peace are peculiarly American contributions. They are conceptions which spring directly out of our own experience, which we have already worked out and tested on a smaller scale in our own political life. Leaders of other nations may regard them as iridescent dreams; we know better, for we have actually tried them.[95]

In the final analysis, Dewey thought of America as the "great experiment" that the war had brought to a temporary end. As the great experiment waiting to be applied to other nations, America is "now called to declare to all the world the nature and fruits of this experiment, to declare it not by words or books, but by exhibiting the two primary conditions under which the world may achieve the happiness of ... a peace which is not the mere absence of war, but which is fruit-bearing concord."[96]

Dewey is advocating a world which is to be a democratic federation of states. It is to be governed by international law so that social and political justice will prevail for all. In trying to make the world safe for democracy, there were two internal problems or contradictions to which Dewey was either ignorant or which he consciously overlooked:

---

[94] *Ibid.*

[95] *Ibid.*, p. 643.

[96] *Ibid.*, p. 644.

(i) Dewey seemed to have lacked adequate understanding of the movement of events, a lack which made him socially, economically, politically and morally somewhat naive; (ii) while fighting to save the world for democracy, there were numerous Americans who were being denied the basis of participatory democracy in America--a position which Dewey had acknowledged publicly by his attendance of the First National Negro Conference of 1909.

As was seen earlier, Dewey was quick to accuse the young and the pacifist of "moral innocency and an inexpertness which have been engendered by the moral training which they have undergone."[97] As things consummated, Dewey was the one guilty of moral innocency and inexpertness having misunderstood in near totality the movements of events. His naivete is confirmed in a statement by Sidney Hook, a statement to which Dewey would completely agree.

> It is true that he did not actively oppose the War. His knowledge of the economics and politics of imperialism was inadequate, and he placed too much confidence in Woodrow Wilson's new deal in foreign policy. He has admitted that the experience was highly instructive.[98]

In other words, it was Dewey who at the age of fifty-seven had very little scientific knowledge of the economic or political aspects of imperialism or war. There are several examples which confirm this. The one which seems most pronounced is his unqualified support of Woodrow Wilson's policies, internally and foreign, on moral and political grounds. Wilson, Dewey believed, showed almost unparalleled

---

[97] Dewey, "Conscience and Compulsion," in *Character and Events*, p. 578.

[98] Sidney Hook, *John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait* (New York: John Day Company, 1939), p. 227.

skill in the transformation of America's moral attitude from that of passive resister to one of active participant. Dewey credited Wilson with creating the belief that if Germany was defeated moral democracy would reign supreme on the world stage. This step was necessary to change the American conscience from an "unqualified neutrality" to a fighting force to save the world for democracy. Dewey doesn't mention the fact that on October 23, 1914, President Wilson agreed to "look the other way" when war credit was extended by J. P. Morgan and Company and the National City Bank to the French and British governments; perhaps, he didn't know of this act of "unqualified neutrality".

Another testimony to Dewey's political and social naivete is the internal turmoil brewing as a result of the new confederacy fully instituted by Georgia's passing of legislation which completed the disfranchisement of blacks in Southern States on January 1, 1909. Any black who persisted in exercising his constitutional right to vote was lynched. This, in microcosm, was the state of the black man when Dewey attended the First National Negro Conference in the summer of 1909. As a result of interacting on equal terms with a large number of blacks for, perhaps, the first time in his life, Dewey turned away from the black man and his plight. This attitude of benign neglect of the black man's plight was seen in the attitude of Dewey's champion of democracy, the moralist who was going to save the world for democracy with Dewey's blessings--Woodrow Wilson.

In the election campaign of 1912, while running on a program which pledged a New Freedom for all, Wilson openly solicited the black vote in return for campaign promises which never materialized. Not only did the promises never materialize, Wilson's administration vigorously

reinstituted universal racial segregation in the federal bureaucracy, namely, in the segregating of all federal facilities.

Wilson "contended that segregation was instituted in the interest of the Negroes, and throughout he stoutly maintained this position,"[99] a position which caused some consternation amongst many progressives of the day. Needless to say, Dewey was not among those who voiced disapproval of Wilson's policies of racial "justice" for the black man. In 1918, Dewey wrote of internal racial harmony in America. Surely, Dewey could not include the black American in this claim. Circumstances would not permit.

> When World War I began in 1917 the status of the Negro in American society changed because of powerful forces beyond the control of white society. The war, for example, brought about the migration of hundreds of thousands of Negroes into northern cities; it also provided an opportunity for 350,000 Negroes to fight for their country--which they did with distinction--in segregated battalions. Yet the changes in the status of the Negro which the war forced white America to accept did nothing to change the racist orientation of white America.
>
> The First World War, like the second, encouraged bi-racial support of war goals. Blacks succumbed to the idea of common effort; whites gave voice to the rhetoric of preserving democracy while continuing racist policies and actions.[100]

---

[99] Arthur S. Link, *Woodrow Wilson and The Progressive Era 1910-1917* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), pp. 64-65.

[100] Barry N. Schwartz and Robert Dish, eds., *White Racism: Its History, Pathology and Practice* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1970), pp. 43-44.

CHAPTER IV

CAPITALISM AND ALIENATION

KARL MARX AND JOHN DEWEY: A SOCIOLOGICAL COMPARISON

Both Marx and Dewey were at one time in their respective intellectual careers "students" of Hegel, and due to this common relationship both shared many similarities in philosophical outlook. Moreover, they eventually opposed Hegel's idealism and related theories with their doctrines of natural empiricism and social radicalism, Marx more so than Dewey. There are many points which they held in common as a consequence of their "common denominators". Granted that there are many similarities, at present, I would like to compare and contrast their concepts of alienation--a term coined by Hegel. This will be an attempt, in a general fashion, to define alienation, seek out its sources, and determine what measures are recommended by Marx and Dewey, respectively, if any, for its supersession.

Marx's conception of alienation will be taken first for two reasons: (i) he explicitly defines and elaborates on the theme of alienation; (ii) he precedes Dewey in time and this fact enabled Dewey to have ample opportunity to analyze Marx's conception of alienation and criticize it.

Marx sees alienation as an outgrowth of the capitalistic economic system. Such an economic system is based upon competition which has resulted in the restoration of monopolistic control of the wealth and property produced by the many which is expropriated in legal fashion by the few: 'The only moving force that political economy recognizes

are human greed and the war among the greedy--competition."[1]

Marxism is a philosophy of man. Man is the presupposition and end of all human activity, especially philosophy and science. All subject-matter is to be understood and judged according as it reflects the ethical interest of man: "Ethically . . . for Marx as for Feuerbach, man is the sole and ultimate standard, the absolute in terms of which all else is to be judged." Thus, it could be said that for Marx man is the common denominator, the "ultimate standard" of all understanding and judgment. Such an ethic when taken seriously by man facilitates "a strong emotional rejection of his actual life in the real world" and results in most men feeling "dependent, forsaken, humiliated, frustrated and fallen from grace."[2]

Man's true essence as opposed to mere existence is an outgrowth of his productive life; that is, transcending the world of physical subsistence and necessity, man can realize himself as an end of nature as opposed to a mere means only in the work process. This productive life consists of two interrelated parts: (i) man can either produce for subsistence under compulsion of direct physical need, like the animal, or (ii) he truly produces where he has transcended the basic need of subsistence. He is capable of attaining as far as his capabilities will allow his true essence in a state of relatively unalienated labor, where free choice and activity reign supreme; where the worker and his work is permeated with human significance and dignity.

---

[1]Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts," in *Marx's Concept of Man*, trans. by T. B. Bottomore, ed. by Erich Fromm (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1961), p. 94.

[2]Eugene Kamenka, *Marxism and Ethics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969), pp. 15-16.

Marx asks two questions about man's existence and essence and their relationship to the human predicament: Why (diagnosis) is man estranged, alienated? and How is this estrangement, alienation to be superseded (Aufhebung)? Marx begins with the existential fact that man is an estranged being full of contradictions in order to prepare for its transcendence, i.e., supersession of contradictions. Why is man in antagonistic contradictions and how are these opposites to be unified?

According to Marx, there are four primary and interrelated aspects of alienation: (i) man is alienated from the very process which in fact should be the means of his self-actualization; (ii) he is alienated from the product of his labor (nature); (iii) he becomes alienated from his species-being; (iv) he is alienated from other men, from society.

Man is alienated in the very work process which, in fact, should liberate him. That is, it is in the production of private property that man initially becomes alienated from his labor (self-alienation) and the product of that labor (thing alienation). The political economy, which exists in countries that function under the capitalistic economic system, merely formulated the laws of alienated labor and put them to use in the production of private property--the consequence of alienated labor. Hence, private property is not the cause of alienated labor, it is its results.

Man's essence is unequivocally wrapped up in productive work. However, under a capitalistic economic system the worker becomes estranged from productive activity, the work process. It is a form of self-estrangement, an active alienation because the relationship of the worker to his own activity becomes something alien to himself. It is an activity which no longer belongs to the worker himself, but to forces

which reside outside of the immediate work process. For Marx, alienated labor is pure misery and forms dilectical opposites: "strength as weakness, creation as emasculation."[3] Furthermore, there is a direct correlation between the intensity of alienation and the amount of work done: under the dehumanizing and externally enforced work process, the more commodities produced the more the worker is alienated, for his essence exists in free, self-initiated, and creative labor which the present productive arrangements negate.

That the product of alienated labor becomes alien to the worker "merely sums up the alienation which exists in the work process itself."[4] Having answered his question in advance, Marx asks the question: "How could the worker stand in an alien relationship to the product of his activity if he were not alienated in the very act of production?"[5]

The object of man's labor, its product, stands in opposition to its producer,; it, the product, becomes a force, power extraneous and foreign to the producer as an alien thing and man is alienated from nature. "The product after all is but the resumé of his activity, of production. Hence if the product of labor is alienation, production itself must be active alienation--the alienation of activity, the activity of alienation."[6]

---

[3]Karl Marx, "Alienated Labor," in *Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society*, eds. Eric and Mary Josephson (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), p. 98.

[4]*Ibid.*, p. 97.

[5]*Ibid.*

[6]*Ibid.*

The product of alienated or estranged *labor* has a two-fold effect on the worker: (i) further self-alienation, estrangement and (ii) estrangement from nature. First, the product of non-alienated labor expresses man's essence and human dignity; however, alienated labor debases and negates man's essence in direct proportion to the number of objects produced, a debasement that has physical, intellectual, and spiritual repercussions. Secondly, "the relationship of the product of labor becomes an alien object which dominates him. The relationship implies at the same time a relationship to the sensuous external world of nature as an alien and hostile world."[7] Man becomes alienated from nature, for the object of his labor negates instead of confirming his true essence, species-being in the external world.

The third aspect of alienation, as Marx sees it, is derivative of the first two; it is an expression of them in terms of human relations; that is, the relationship of mankind in general. Moreover, the fourth aspect is to be derived from the same sources or relationships, a relationship which exists between man and other men.

Man is a species-being, "a creature of his species," "because within himself he, one man, represents the whole of mankind."[8] In being alienated from his species-being, man becomes estranged "from his being as a member of the human species."[9]

---

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 98.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Istvan Meszaros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1972), p. 14; also Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts," p. 103.

Alienated labor not only alienates man from nature and himself, it further alienates man from other men; their natures, their species-beings, and society in general: "In general, the statement that man is alienated from his species life means that each man is alienated from others, and that each of the others is likewise alienated from human life."[10] Moreover, alienation is an expression and realization of man as a social, communicative being living in association with others. His individual being is a social expression of society writ large. When he expresses himself he expresses "social life".

In summary, alienated or estranged labor results in man turning his productive activity into a loss, castigation, torment. His product by not belonging to himself is an alien power to be enjoyed by another. His life becomes the subject matter of others and not an object of his own self-determination. Alienated labor results in one's self-conscious species-being inverting the process of nature--the realization of man's essence as a species-being through his productive activity where "free and conscious activity is the generic character of human beings"[11]--"into a mere means of physical existence."[12] There are many evils inherent in such alienated activity which degrades man physically, intellectually, and spiritually.

Physically, man is dependent upon alienated labor for subsistence. This negates his species-being in that under the present economic system employment is either at a subsistence level or not at all, unemployment:

---

[10] Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts," p. 103.

[11] Marx, "Alienated Labor," p. 99.

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

"Indeed, work itself becomes something which he can obtain only with the greatest difficulty and at intervals."[13]

Intellectually alienated, coerced, and forced labor "produces intelligence, but for the worker, stupidity and cretinism." The worker "cannot freely develop his physical and mental powers, but instead becomes mentally debased as well as physically exhausted."[14]

Spiritually, alienated labor "satisfies no spontaneous creative urge, but is only a means for the satisfaction of wants which have nothing to do with work."[15] The following statement of Marx's on estrangement of laborer from his labor sums up the evils of alienation.

> In the laws of political economy, the alienation of the worker from his product is expressed as follows: the more the worker produces, the less he has to consume; the more value he creates, the more valueless, the more unworthy he becomes; the better formed is his product, the more deformed becomes the worker, the more civilized his product, the more brutalized becomes the worker; the mightier the work, the more powerless the worker; the more ingenious the work, the duller becomes the worker and the more he becomes nature's bondsman.[16]

To many, Marx's life's work is to be seen as an attempt to liberate the masses of men from human bondage and its alienating circumstances. How shall this be done? Who shall do it and by what means? However, before we get into Marx's positive recommendations, I should like to compare Dewey's notion of alienation.

Dewey had an aversion for Marx and Marxism which undoubtedly influenced his attitudes and dispositions toward his work. It seems as

---

[13] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 96.

though he considered Marxism a dogmatism to be avoided to preserve intellectual clarity and honesty.[17] And it is this attitude and disposition that prevents him from accepting the concepts and catagories of Marx's social analysis. Dewey never speaks directly to or about the issue of alienation. Although never explicitly stating his case for alienation, there is to be found in his writings, in implicit form, a relatively coherent doctrine of alienation along with "generous" suggestions of necessary measures which will lead eventually to its eradication.

Dewey speaks of "confusion, uncertainty, and drift"[18] which characterizes the American culture: individually and collectively. This drift, confusion, and uncertainty is caused by existing socio-cultural affairs and their institutional and social arrangements. In more specific terms, the result of such institutional and social arrangements is conflict, a "conflict between institutions and habits originating in the pre-scientific and pre-technological age and the new forces generated by science and technology."[19] What is the more specific cause of this conflict in culture which prevents the individual from the liberation and realization of his capacities which should be the "law" of his life? And how is it perpetuated?

The state of drift, confusion, and uncertainty which is characteristic of man's present estate is due primarily to a culture based upon a regime of economic despotism, a regime that, in Dewey's words, "is in such large measure merely the agent of a dominant economic class in its

---

[17] Jim Cork, "John Dewey and Karl Marx," in *John Dewey: Philosopher of Science and Freedom* , p. 335.

[18] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 54.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

struggle to keep and extend the gains it has amassed at the expense of genuine social order, unity and development."[20] That Dewey thinks the present culture is primarily responsible for the existing estate of man is seen as he specifically addresses himself to the problem during the earlier days of World War I when he speaks of the internal social reconstruction necessary after the war in an effort to alleviate existing social evils.

The "lost individual" is alienated physically, mentally, and spiritually as a result of existing economic arrangements and conditions inherited from European society, arrangements and conditions under which the individual becomes enslaved. In other words, alienation has its primary source in the failure of the existing social order and its economic regime "to secure its members steady and useful employment."[21] It is in the type of employment or the lack of it where the seeds of alienation are first planted. There are many evils reaped from such a bitter harvest.

Employment is "insecure and precarious," bringing in its train "enormous poverty and misery."[22] For Dewey, poverty is of two complimentary types: physical and mental-spiritual. Physical poverty and misery is an evil to be seriously considered due to "the low rate of return for employment."[23] Meager wages and lack of employment lead to economic destitution and intensification of misery. Economic security

---

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

[21] Dewey, "The Economic Basis of the New Society," p. 417.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*

is a basic necessity for the realization of the good life. It is instrumental, a means to desired ends. And in most civilized societies, this notion, the economic being instrumental to the good life, is nominally accepted.

An even more serious poverty than the physical, which is brought on by alienated labor or its lack, is mental poverty which is caused by a lack of stimulation due to routine tasks which ultimately result in loss of opportunities to use one's faculties that invariably evolves into a spiritual poverty. Moreover, the lack of mental and spiritual stimulation undermines the morale and character of men. "It is impossible for a highly industrialized society to attain a widespread high excellence of mind when multitudes are excluded from occasion for the use of thought and emotion in their daily occupations."[24]

Dewey realized that "under present conditions" "the material results cannot be separated from development of mind and character"; that present conditions have produced "mental poverty that comes from one-sided distortion of mind," a mental poverty that "is ultimately more significant than poverty in material goods."[25] That there is a poverty of mind as a result of denied opportunity under the present economic regime is a point in which Dewey persist.

> The subordination of the enterprises to pecuniary profit reacts to make the workers "hand" only. Their hearts and brains are not engaged. They execute plans which they do not form, and of whose meaning and intent they are ignorant--beyond the fact that these plans make a profit for others and secure a wage for themselves. . . . there is an undeniable limitation of opportunities; and minds are warped, frustrated, unnourished by their activities--

---

[24]John Dewey, *Individualism, Old and New* (New York: Minton, Balch and Company, 1930), p. 133.

[25]*Ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

> the ultimate source of all constant nurture of the spirit. The philosopher's idea of a complete separation of mind and body is realized in thousands of industrial workers, and the result is a depressed body and an empty and distorted mind.[26]

Mind is the source of creative and spiritual activity. When the mind is "warped, frustrated, unnourished" then possibilities of a higher and more gratifying spiritual life becomes less likely. Dewey proceeds to ask questions about the present conditions of work and its bearing on the mental and spiritual development of the masses of workers.

> What gain has been made in the matter of establishing conditions that give the mass of workers not only what is called "security" but also constructive interest in the work they do? What gain has been made in giving individuals, the great mass of individuals, an opportunity to find themselves and then to educate themselves for what they can best do in work which is socially useful and such as to give free play in development of themselves.[27]

Dewey sees present mental and spiritual debasement as the work of the capitalist economic system whose relations are the dominant and controlling forces in setting patterns of human relations and values.

Marx was a secular-humanist morally committed to the eradication of forces which are alien to man's "natural" estate. Ethically speaking, Marx in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* deals with the conception of alienation and man's ethical self-activity towards the goal of emancipation. Fromm has the following to say about Marx's efforts:

> Marx's aim was the spiritual emancipation of man, of his liberation from the chains of economic determinism, of restituting him in his fellow man and with nature. Marx's philosophy was, in secular, non-theistic language, a new and radical step forward

---

[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 131-132.

[illegible] "The Economic Basis of the New Society," p. 428.

> in the tradition of prophetic messianism; it was aimed at the full realization of individualism, the very aim which has guided Western thinking from the Renaissance and the Reformation far into the nineteenth century.[28]

Alienation is the manisfestation of man's loss of freedom, that condition under which "the object produced by labor, its product, now stands opposed to it as an *alien being*, a *power independent* of the producer."[29] In order to eliminate this condition, the institution of a democratic and scientific socialism is a necessity. Democratic socialism becomes the means to the realization of desired and liberal ends.

Democratic socialism or communism abolishes private property--the means of production--as it exists under the present social, political, and economic system. In doing so, it assists in the liberation of each individual from further self-alienation.

> Communism is the positive abolition of *private* property, of human self-alienation, and thus the real appropriation of human nature through and for man. It is, therefore, the return of man himself as a social, i.e., really human, being, a complete and conscious return which assimilates all the wealth of previous development. Communism as a fully-developed naturalism is humanism and as a fully-developed humanism is naturalism. It is the *definitive* resolution of the antagonism between man and nature, and between man and man. It is the true solution of the conflict between existence and essence, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species. It is the solution of the riddle of history and knows itself to be this solution.[30]

The suppression of private property as it exists under capitalism brings forth "complete emancipation of all human qualities and senses"[31] for human utilization.

---

[28] Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*, p. 3.

[29] Marx, "Economic and Political Manuscripts," p. 95.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 95.

Marx wants to abolish all relations of servitude by leaving the domain of necessity and entering that of freedom. How would Marx issue in his brand of social-democracy? What methods are to be deployed? Will his methodology be of a reformist nature or a revolutionary one with violent and distructive repercussions?

The needed transformation of society with its corrupted and dehumanizing system of property, its method of production and similarly derived superstructure will come as a result of class struggle. The struggle is to be one between exploiter and exploited, a conscious, deliberate, and sustained effort. The exploited class must become a conscious revolutionary force whose primary responsibility becomes that of enacting a political revolution of whose historical significance they fully understand. It is interesting to note that for Marx "entire sections"[32] of the bourgeoisie upon becoming conscious of their true condition within the industrial order will become articulate revolutionary proletariat.

There is to be a conscious effort to transform the existing social and political system, not one which unconsciously brings desirable changes in its train. Education is to assist in this effort. Education, in a more or less informal sense, is necessary to the instilling of desired attitudes and dispositions which are to assist in a conscious undertaking to destroy the existing social and political system as a means to the establishment of a more natural, scientific, democratic, and humane one.

For both Marx and Dewey human society is individuals in associated living. Man is the product of society and society is the

---

[32]Karl Marx and Friederich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party" in *Marx & Engels: Basic Writings on Politics & Philosophy*, p. 17.

product of man. In the words of Marx:

> as society itself produces man as man, so it is produced by him. Activity and mind are social in their content as well as in their *origin*; they are *social* activity and *social* mind. The human significance of nature only exists for social man, because only in this case is nature a bond with other men, the basis of his existence for others and of their existence for him. Only then is nature the *basis* of his own *human* experience and a vital element of human reality. The natural existence of man has here become his *human* existence and nature itself has become human for him. Thus *society* is the accomplished union of man with nature, the veritable resurrection of nature, the realized naturalism of man and the realized humanism of nature.[33]

Furthermore, Marx perceives the consciousness of man, a product of social intercourse, as an outgrowth of social interaction within the context of a particular environment. Since all things which concern man are socially derived, so is his consciousness: "*My own existence* is a social activity."[34]

That man's physical and mental existence are cultural products is readily seen in the education or conscious formation of infants. The child is dependent upon the social consciousness of adults for nurture and direction: "Consciousness is therefore from the very beginning a social product, and remains so as long as men exist at all."[35]

The consciousness of man is an outgrowth of socio-cultural environmental influences and as such is "true" or "false", "good" or "bad", "desirable" or "undesirable". However, for Marx, most of what the average person thinks within the context of the existing social regime is false consciousness, thus "the true mainsprings of man's actions are unconscious to him."[36] Most people possess false consciousness because

---

[33] Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts," p. 129.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 130.

[35] Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*, p. 21.

[36] *Ibid.*

of "an alien reality";[37] that is, their consciousness is moulded, shaped, formed within the context of "an alien reality." According to Marx, this is undesirable. Man should seek true consciousness, the "sensuous appropriation of the human essence and of human life, or objective man and of human creations, by and for man" which "is only the *theoretical* form of that whose *living* form is the *real* community, the social entity."[38]

Man's mental state or consciousness consisting of ideas, attitudes and dispositions is derived directly from experience in associated living and is social expression of such experience.[39] Moreover, Marx is of the contention that some ideas are more "true" than others. The "truth" of an idea is testable in direct proportion to its ability to meet criteria based on an objective reality. Ideas are "possibilities of truth" to be proven more or less true by meeting the test of reality--"truth as satisfaction." This notion is seen in Marx's second *Theses on Feuerbach*.[40]

Marx's conception of society, consciousness, and ideas are important tools in his philosophy of education and its use in speeding up the historical and revolutionary process. The proletariat overcomes the false consciousness of capitalistic society by becoming "truly" conscious of existing reality and its debased, dehumanized existence. When this happens the wage-worker gradually evolves into the proletariat.

---

[37]Marx, "Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts," p. 131.

[38]*Ibid.*, p. 131.

[39]*Ibid.*

[40]Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *Marx & Engels: Basic Writings on Politics & Philosophy*, p. 243.

This is the first step in the educational process which will lead to the changing of the economic base of society from capitalism to socialism.

Education for revolution will accelerate and become more of a conscious and revolutionary factor as the poverty of the proletariat--material and moral debasement--become more intensified. Misery and poverty will increase until the proletariat becomes conscious of his depraved existence. This will occur as a result of interaction within the "revolutionizing practice."[41] The proletariat will develop a consciousness commensurate to reality, a revolutionary and communist consciousness. The proletariat, becoming aware of itself as a class, defines its position in the economic order by becoming "aware of their common situation, and of their role in changing or in preserving capitalist society."[42]

C. Wright Mills' contention that Marx does not state how this class consciousness will come about is somewhat of a weak interpretation. Granted that Marx does not set a formal and definite program of education for revolutionary purposes, he does give very clear instances of what he considers as necessary educational guide-lines.

Mills agrees that Marx is of the opinion that ideology and ideas are determined by the economic basis of a particular society and that "the class consciousness of the proletariat will follow this rule."[43] However, Mills does not read Marx carefully enough even though noticing that "unions and mass labor parties are useful as training grounds for

---

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 244.

[42] C. Wright Mills, *The Marxist* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1962), p. 87.

[43] *Ibid.*

revolution, but are not a guarantee for socialism."[44] Marx states very clearly that the work process is the revolutionizing practice which shapes the consciousness of wage-workers into a revolutionary and communist proletariat aware of its historic role, one who consciously and deliberately tries to accomplish its purposes. Moreover, communist consciousness consists in communist ideas which will be disseminated by the proletariat as a result of forming associations that deliberately convert the wage-worker into revolutionary conscious proletariat. Although communist ideas are sufficient to issue in the socialistic state of communism, they must be ideas which 'prove' themselves in revolutionary, practical activity.

Marx pays particular attention to the school as an agency of social evolution or transformation. The school which shapes individual and collective consciousness should become an agency for dissemenation of revolutionary and "true" consciousness. The school is to become an agency of revolutionizing practice. The notion becomes more apparent when Marx attacks the German Workers Party's demands upon the state to provide universal and equal elementary education for all. Marx attacks the Party's request not because of its demand for universal and equal education for all, but because it had not "demanded technical schools (theoretical and Practical)."[45] He saw in technical schools the revolutionary practice or experience necessary for the formation of "true" consciousness of future proletariat. Furthermore, he objects to the "general prohibition of child labor" for similar reasons.

---

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

[45] Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program," *Marx & Engels: Basic Writings on Politics & Philosophy*, pp. 130-131.

> A general prohibition of child labor is incompatible with the existence of large-scale industry and hence an empty, pious wish. Its realization--if it were possible--would be reactionary, since, with a strict regulation of the working time according to the different age groups and other safety measures for the protection of children, an early combination of productive labor with education is one of the most potent means for the transformation of present-day society.[46]

Here we see a meaning of the revolutionizing practice as it occurs within the "work" process of the existing economic regime. Marx believed in the doctrine of economic determinism; that is, economics are the basis of all other social "structures": ideological, political, religious, etc. The workingman when educated under the auspices of the present and dominant economic regime which is controlled by the ideology of the capitalist is educated into false consciousness, an alien reality not suited to the position of the masses whose class interests, at bottom, are diametrically opposed to that of the bourgeoisie.

The capitalistic society sows the seeds of its own destruction. As society evolves so will the consciousness of the masses of proletariat. Out of his revolutionizing work experience seeds of a new society are planted. It is the nature of the historical process of capitalism that the "historical agent"--the proletariat--will evolve in "true" consciousness and number. The process will take time but it is inevitable. The successful revolutionary blow will be delivered by a class-conscious and revolutionary proletariat which understands its historic role and purpose and proceeds deliberately to accomplish it.

> The building up of the revolutionary potential of the proletariat takes a considerable time; the workers acquire political experience in the course of a prolonged struggle against the dominant class; there are many assaults before the political hold of that class

---

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 131.

> on society is loosened. But as soon as it is loosened, it is quickly lost. Not necessarily all at once, but within a short period of time. For the proletariat, ripeness is all. They must strike again and again, not so much to capture the citadel piece by piece, as to learn how to strike the blow which, when their hour comes, will deliver the citadel into their hands.[47]

Now, according to Dewey, alienation is a cultural phenomenon. It is a problem which permeates the social order. It occurs primarily as a result of inheritance of institutions and traditions, ideas and attitudes, dispositions and characters of European origins, an inheritance which has resulted in dualisms between theory and practice in all things social.

Ideas lead to action, and traditional ideas lead to schizophrenic action. Traditional ideas are encumberances; they are more than irrelevant in that they are harmful in effect: "They are the chief obstacles to the formation of a new individuality integrated within itself and with a liberated function in the society wherein it exists."[48]

Alienation occurs and will continue to exist as long as traditional ideas and values are dominant. They are antiquated ideas and values which result in a lack of mental and moral preparation to control the impact of swiftly moving changes. We live in the twentieth century physically and externally but in "thought and feeling" "we are living in some bygone century."[49]

Alienation, being a socio-cultural phenomenon, has as its primary source of nurture the existing economic, and other institutions which

---

[47]John Plamenatz, *Man and Society: A Critical Examination of Some Important Social and Political Theories from Machiavelli to Marx*, II (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd., 1963), p. 309.

[48]Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 93.

[49]Dewey, *Individualism, Old and New*, p. 9.

operate by means of older beliefs and ideas. This may be readily seen in attitudes that control the formal school setting which are devices for perpetuating an economic regime for the pecuniary benefit of the few.[50] Dewey looks to the monopolization of mental and spiritual capital as in all probability more harmful than the monopolization of material capital. He fully realizes that "the love of private possessions is not confined to material goods."[51]

Dewey makes an analogy between the monopolization of spiritual capital by the dominant few in control of the existing economic regime and their fear of the application of scientific hypotheses in areas where social issues and problems are in need of resolution. Science is no respector of traditional mythology built as a mechanism of self-delusion and comfort. This is especially seen in the attitudes of those who have finally become "secure" in the capitalist society.[52]

Accordingly, Dewey sees as the chief obstacle to the recovery of composed, effective and creative individuality the persistence of traditional ideas of economics with its corresponding politic--the political economy--which define industry and commerce as institutions and associations for private appropriation of socially produced goods and values.

> Since the legal institutions and patterns of mind characteristic of ages of civilization still endure, there exists the conflict that brings confusion into every phase of present life. . . . Lag in mental and moral matters provides the bulwark

---

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 127.

[51] *Ibid.*, p. 162.

[52] *Ibid.*

> of the older institutions; in expressing the past they still express present beliefs, outlooks and purposes.[53]

We are living in a collective age and it is only by collective social control of economic institutions that we can detect, prevent, and cure present and future evils of alienation: "Social control effected through organized application of social intelligence is the sole form of social control that can and will get rid of existing evils without landing us finally in some form of coercive control from above and outside."[54] Dewey persists:

> A stable recovery of individuality waits upon an elimination of the older economic and political individualism, an elimination which will liberate imagination and endeavor for the task of making corporate society contribute to the free culture of its members. Only by economic revision can the sound element in the older individualism--equality and opportunity--be made a reality.[55]

The economic is instrumental to the good life: "Imagine a society free from pecuniary domination, and it becomes self-evident that material commodities are invitations to individual taste and choice, and occasions for individual growth."[56] Social and public control of economic organizations is to assure the secure basis for an ordered expression of individual capacity and satisfaction of the needs of man in non-economic directions. Such organization will "institute a socialized economy of material security and plenty that will release human energy for pursuit of higher values."[57]

---

[53] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 76.

[54] Dewey, "The Economic Basis of the New Society," p. 431.

[55] Dewey, *Individualism, Old and New*, p. 72.

[56] *Ibid.*, p. 158.

[57] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 90

As we have seen, there are many similarities between the philosophies of Marx and Dewey, but nowhere are there more stronger resemblances as between their conceptions of society, consciousness, and education as these terms apply to social transformation and revolution.

For Dewey, society is "an organic union of individuals."[58] And there is a reciprocal function that society performs between itself and man: man creates society and society in turn creates man. The individual is the social in that all he is--good or bad, desirable and undesirable, consciously and unconsciously--partakes as he interacts within a particular environment. Life "signifies not bare passive existence (supposing there is such a thing), but a way of acting; environment or medium signifies what enters into this activity as a sustaining or frustrating condition."[59]

Immature members of society are nurtured by the social environment. The social environment shapes the internal and external habits of action: "Thinking and feeling that have to do with action in association with others is as much a social mode of behavior as is the most overt cooperative or hostile act." It performs this function "by operating steadily to call out certain acts," and as a result "habits are formed which function with the same uniformity as the original stimuli."[60]

Dewey seems to be in agreement with Marx when he speaks of training as opposed to education. Most children are trained, that is, they are

---

[58]John Dewey, "My Pedagogic Creed," in *John Dewey on Education: Selected Writings*, ed. by Reginald D. Archambualt (New York: Random House, Inc., 1964), p. 429.

[59]Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 12.

[60]*Ibid.*

taken advantage of by adults who are more "mature". The child "is trained like an animal rather than educated like a human being. His instincts remain attached to their original objects of pain or pleasure." He "is simply played upon to secure habits which are useful."[61] This is equivalent to the development of what Marx calls false consciousness, a consciousness where "the true mainsprings of man's actions are unconscious to him."[62] Dewey speaks of man rarely recognizing "the extent in which his conscious estimates of what is worth while and what is not, are due to standards of which he is not conscious at all."[63]

> . . . in general it may be said that the things which we take for granted without inquiry or reflection are just the things which determine our conscious thinking and decide our conclusions. And these habitudes which lie below the level of reflection are just those which have been formed in the constant give and take of relationship with others.[64]

"Education" occurs when the child participates in common communal activity. It is here that the original impulse is altered. The child does "not merely act in a way agreeing with the actions of others, but, in so acting, the same ideas and emotions are aroused in him that animate in others."[65] There is no split between thought and action; in other words, there is unity of idea and belief, attitude and disposition, mind and character, character and conduct.

Dewey has a problem: that of alienation whose "causes are inherent in the existing socio-economic regime." To resolve this problem the

---

[61] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[62] Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*, p. 21.

[63] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 18.

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

existing economic regime must be changed and a new one organized under the control of a democratic socialistic administration for the "postive and enduring opportunity for productive and creative activity and all that that signifies for the development of the potentialities of human nature."[66] Why does Dewey advocate democratic socialism? And what are his recommendations for its realization?

Dewey advocates democratic socialism for primarily two reasons: (i) he professes to believe in the principles of democracy--equality and liberty for all, and (ii) in doing so he is keeping with the tendencies of the movements of events. American society is becoming more socialistic everyday and economic determinism is a fact of American life. In order to reach one's goal one must recognize tendencies, "to take account of the realities of the situation and to frame policies in the social interest. Only then can organized action in behalf of the social interest be made a reality."[67] The tendency is more and more toward socialism and the choice is between one that is public and one that is private or capitalistic.

Democratic control of means becomes necessary for the realization of democratic ends; for Dewey is ultimately concerned with the production of individual human beings. Material goods are means and are therefore intermediate and auxiliary. How the means are used determine the realization of ends, and Dewey sees social control of the means as the only way "that the liberty of individuals will be supported by the very structure of economic organization."[68]

---

[66]Dewey, "The Economic Basis of the New Society," p. 428.

[67]Dewey, *Individualism, Old and New*, pp. 119-120.

[68]Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 88.

Dewey, being a man of scientific mind and character, had a vision, a picture of the pattern that is required to issue in the millennium--"a social order where the forces of productivity are cooperatively controlled and used in the interest of the effective liberty and the cultural development of the individuals that constitute society."[69] To the question: How is this to be brought about? Dewey replies with education and force.

Education has two interrelated senses: (i) an informal and incidental sense and (ii) a formal and directly specific sense. The informal and incidental sense of education includes "all the influences that go to form the attitudes and dispositions (of desire as well as of belief), which constitute dominant habits of mind and character."[70] Of the senses of education this is the most influential in terms of initial development of morality and mentality, and the reinforcement of attitudes and dispositions as they lead to action. He also talks about schools.

> Schools are, indeed, one important method of the transmission which forms the dispositions of the immature; but it is only one means, and, compared with other agencies, a relatively superficial means. Only as we have grasped the necessity of more fundamental and persistent modes of tuition can we make sure of placing the scholastic methods in their true context.[71]

Life-long attitudes and dispositions are set by the child's interaction within the social environment of the particular group to which he is a member. Lasting attitudes become unconsciously ingrained and the most formal education can do is "purge them of some of their grossness, and to furnish objects which make their activity more productive

---

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 54.

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[71] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 4.

of meaning."[72]

Schools are "formal agencies for producing those mental attitudes, those modes of feeling and thinking, which are the *essence* of a distinctive culture"; "they are not the ultimate formative force. Social institutions, the trends of occupations, the pattern of social arrangements, are the finally controlling influences in shaping minds." Not only are they final means of moulding minds, they are the means which give justification and enforcement and continuity to values and ideas: "Consequently the effective education, that which really leaves a stamp on character and thought, is obtained when graduates come to take their part in the activities of an adult society which put exaggerated emphasis upon business and the results of business success."[73]

Dewey subscribes, like Marx, to the principle that some ideas are more "true" than others. "Truth" is looked upon as satisfaction,

> a satisfaction of the needs and conditions of the problem out of which the idea, the purpose and method of action, arises. It includes public and objective conditions. It is not to be manipulated by whim or personal idiosyncrasy. Again when truth is defined as utility, it is often thought to mean utility for some purely personal end, some profit upon which a particular individual has set his heart. . . . As matter of fact, truth as utility means service in making just that contribution to reorganization in experience that the idea or theory claims to be able to make.[74]

Here Dewey is using the term "truth" as an "abstract noun applied to the collection of cases, actual, foreseen and desired, that receive confirmation in their works and consequences";[75] we customarily use the

---

[72] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[73] Dewey, *Individualism, Old and New*, p. 129.

[74] Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 157.

[75] *Ibid.*

term "truth" as a concrete noun, a fact. Here truth is seen as "satisfaction," a potential to change the abstract into the concrete. It is the responsibility of the philosopher to formulate ideas or "truths" which are commensurate with the facts of the movements of events in order to provide generous hypotheses--plans and policies--to be tested experimentally.

Laissez-faire liberalism has failed. Its failure is due to "the fruits of its own policies"[76] and ideas upon which such policies were based. Society is functioning on antiquated ideas--moral and mental--which are nowhere "near even with the actual movement of events."[77] This is the chief obstacle to the realization of a twentieth century morality and mentality. There is a needed change in patterns of ideas, beliefs, desires, purposes, attitudes and dispositions which form mind and character. There is a need for a radical, renascent liberalism which will use education, in its broadest sense, as an

> aid in producing the habits of mind and character, the intellectual and moral patterns, that are somewhere near even with the actual movements of events. It is, I repeat, the split between the latter as they have externally occurred and the ways of desiring, thinking, and of putting emotion and purpose into execution that is the basic cause of present confusion of mind and paralysis in action.[78]

Liberalism is to become radical for two reasons: (i) it must issue in a social system commensurate with present movements of events by (ii) counteracting the accelerated change produced by traditional ideas. Conditions have changed tremendously and are continuing to do so and radical methods are now necessary to counteract the direction of such change and bring it into harmony with a morality and mentality

---

[76]Dewey, *Problems of Men*, p. 132.

[77]Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 61.

[78]*Ibid.*

which is commensurate with the present movements of events.

The need for radical change gives rise to radical ideas that will lead of necessity to "throughgoing changes in the set-up of institutions and corresponding activity to bring the changes to pass."[79] In keeping with his principle of the unity of thought and action, it would seem that Dewey would maintain a consistency, that is, remain loyal to his own doctrine. However, Dewey is a "reformer" not a revolutionary and in being so negates to a large extent his own principle. Although the present situation is one of pressing urgency and in need of drastic and radical change and the actual state "cannot be bridged by piecemeal policies,"[80] Dewey advocates "radical" change by gradual implementation of plans and policies: "The process of producing the changes will be, in any case, a gradual one."[81] It is necessary to think radically, but one must act conservatively.

Dewey is interested in solving problems which will benefit the great majority of those concerned. He is concerned with solutions to the most pressing problems which face the American society: the prevention by the few from allowing the masses to regiment material and mechanical forces so that the masses can be released from economic regimentation and the consequent suppression of their cultural possibilites.

Dewey, nonetheless has revolutionary tendencies based upon the concrete movement of events. The tendencies center around his conception of force. Force is the only thing that accomplishes anything.

---

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[80] *Ibid.*

[81] *Ibid.*

Forces are of many types. Dewey makes the distinction between violence and coercion. Violence is mere and sheer force, "force running wild," raw and naked power.[82] Those who customarily employ force employ it in an idle, wasteful and destructful manner; in this form, force becomes violence. Violence becomes their principal mode of effecting drastic transformations.

Dewey opposed violence or force running wild. The use of violence as the main method of effecting desired and desirable social change is anathema. It is wasteful and destructive. The radical and the reactionary are dogmatically committed to violence as the means to desired and desirable ends and in neither instance will universal democracy be the fruit of their labors: for undemocratic means justifies undemocratic ends. Dewey is committed to the intelligent use of force, that is, economical and efficient force. In other words, his radicalism "is committed to organization of intelligent action as the chief method of bringing forth change."[83]

Dewey is under no illusions as to the extent and impact of violence rooted in the American society: it is as American as cherry pie. Violence is ingrained deeply into the very foundation of American culture and its social institutions, institutions that are controlled by reactionaries who subscribe to antiquated ideas, ideals, and values. While reactionaries readily decry the use of violent force by their more liberal opponents, they "are themselves willing to resort to violence

---

[82]Dewey, "Force, Violence and Law," p. 637.

[83]Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, pp. 61-62.

and are ready to put their will into operation."[84] They would use force to leave unchanged the economic arrangement of things. They are possessors of force in many different forms--army, police, press, schools--and "the only reason they do not advocate the use of force is the fact that they are already in possession of it, so their policy is to cover up its existence with idealistic phrases--of which their present use of individual initiative and liberty is a striking example."[85]

> That the control of the means of production by the few in legal possession operates as a standing agency of coercion of the many, may need emphasis in statement, but is surely evident to one who is willing to observe and honestly report the existing scene. It is foolish to regard the political state as the only agency now endowed with coercive power. Its exercise of this power is pale in contrast with that exercised by concentrated and organized property interests.[86]

Since force is the only thing that accomplishes anything, it becomes the means to realization of liberal ends; it becomes the method of issuing in a more liberal and democratic, humane and moral society. However, Dewey prescribes to the "intelligent" use of force, that is, force used intelligently by a mental, moral, and collective majority: "The final argument in behalf of the use of intelligence is that as are the means used so are the actual ends achieved--that is, the consequences."[87] That he prescribes to intelligent use of force as the only truly democratic method of realizing desired and desirable ends may be seen in Dewey's retort to what he considered as Marx's dogmatic

---

[84] *Ibid.*

[85] Dewey, *Problems of Men*, p. 139.

[86] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 64.

[87] *Ibid.*, p. 86.

and simplistic approach to democratic socialism. "For, be it noted, the issue is not whether some amount of violence will accompany the effectuation of radical change of institutions. The question is whether force or intelligence is to be the method upon which we consistently rely and to whose promotion we devote our energies."[88]

Like Marx, Dewey seems to be willing to resort to forceful means to accomplish desirable ends. Also like Marx, he seems to be saying that where there is an intelligent and informed majority some force may be necessary to capture the state of the economy in order to bring in radical social change. But he seems to prefer a peaceful transference or elimination of the existing economic regime; however, being aware that those who represent the status quo will not willingly surrender their positions of wealth and power, he advocates a forceful seizure of wealth and power by an authorized and intelligent majority. The authorized and intelligent majority will use force to its maximum in terms of economy and efficiency against the recalcitrant minority. Intelligent and conscientious individuals will evolve with the proper education into an intelligent and authorized majority conscious of its interest and equipped with plans and policies to be experimentally tested. They become an organized majority in being conscious social revolutionaries who are not only aware of their interest but are consciously aware of the new society which those interests would create.

However, it is interesting to note that Dewey in the main text of *Liberalism and Social Action* purposely stated that "The Communist Manifesto presented two alternatives: *either* the revolutionary change

---

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

and transfer of power to the proletariat, *or* the common ruin of the contending parties."[89] In a footnote, which is usually reserved for incidental and technical matters, Dewey admits to the possibility that the political revolution which Marx saw as necessary to start a social revolution could be a rather peaceful transition, especially in the case of the United States and England. Here Dewey may be seen as displaying some intellectual timidity. As we have seen, Dewey is not opposed to the use of force and in fact vacillates between Marx's stratagems as concerns the use of force to facilitate the necessary political revolution.

Marx in his ninth *Theses on Feuerbach* states his case for philosophy: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however is to change it."[90] Dewey in his approach to the resolution of alienation within the American scene speaks of education as being the primary responsibility of his radical liberalism; its ultimate responsibility is to change the American society so that "individuals may actively share in the wealth of cultural resources that now exist and may contribute, each in his own way, to their further enrichment."[91] In order to do this, says Dewey, philosophy has a negative and positive office to perform.

According to Lefebvre, Marx also sees philosophy as having a negative and positive role extremely similar to that which Dewey had advocated. Philosophy is "radical criticism" as well as the depositor

---

[89] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

[90] Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," p. 245.

[91] Dewey, *Liberalism and Social Action*, p. 57.

of "positive potentialities." The fruits of its negative role leaves "a certain number of concepts."[92] Positively speaking, philosophy "opens up the possibility of a full flowering of human potentialities--reconciliation of the real and the rational, of spontaneity and thought, and the appropriation of human and extra-human nature."[93]

Moreover, Lefebvre gives an account of the purpose and business of philosophy as Marx sees it--an account that Dewey would more than likely agree with in its generality, at least.

> Philosophers have formulated the essence of man in several different ways; they have also played a part in developing it, in constituting it, by singling out certain crucial features which sum up social development. Philosophers proved incapable of realizing this philosophical project. . . . Consequently, to go beyond philosophy means to bring this project to realization, and at the same time to put an end to philosophical alienation. In the course of its sometimes acute conflicts with the state and political society . . . philosophy is brought down to earth, becomes "worldly," sheds its philosophical form. It realizes itself in the world, it becomes the world's actual doing and making.[94]

If this interpretation of Lefebvre's is anywhere near correct, and I find no serious reason to disagree with it, then it could be suggested that Dewey could possibly have been Marx's "worldly" philosopher putting forth solutions of problematic situations in the form of plans and policies to be experimentally tested in action.

> Philosophy cannot of itself resolve the conflicts and dissolve the confusions of the present world.
>
> Only the associated members of the world can do this work in cooperative action. . . . But intellectual instruments are needed to project leading ideas or plans of action.[95]

---

[92] Henri Lefebvre, *The Sociology of Marx*, translated by Norbert Guterman (New York: Random House, Inc., 1969), p. 6.

[93] *Ibid.*

[94] *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

[95] Dewey, *Problems of Men*, p. 16.

It is no wonder that Bertrand Russell when comparing Marx's logical and metaphysical thinking as displayed in his *Theses on Feuerbach* with Dewey's views finds "this doctrine is essentially indistinguishable from instrumentalism."[96] They are *power* philosophers. Philosophers who project generous hypotheses to be proven in action. Russell, Sidney Hook and many others, while allowing for differences in terminology, agree that there are similar logical and metaphysical positions which are fundamental to both Marx and Dewey. Why did Dewey not grasp the many similarities between his philosophical outlook and that of Marx's? Or did he?

Like most men of philosophical vision, Dewey lived with a sense of hope, a hope that America could somehow resolve the problem of alienation without attacking it as a problem set down by a non-American, Karl Marx. America's problems were her own and were to be defined and resolved accordingly. This was the early and middle Dewey speaking! The late Dewey relented and acknowledged the overwhelming Marxist notion of alienation; however, after acknowledging alienation by name, he seemed too old and tired to take up the challenge anew.

> Philosophy still has *a* work to do. It may gain a role for itself for turning to consideration of why it is that man is *now* so alienated from man. It may turn to the projection of large and generous hypotheses which, if used as plans of action, will give intelligent direction to men in search for ways to make the world more one of worth and significance, more homelike, in fact.[97]

---

[96] Bertrand Russell, "Dewey's New *Logic*," in *The Philosophy of John Dewey*, p. 143.

[97] Dewey, *Problems of Men*, p. 20. (Italics mine.)

CHAPTER V

JOHN DEWEY AND THE "AMERICAN DILEMMA": A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

America was from its colonial beginnings a racist society. And from its inception as a nation, it has taken on the form of institutionalized racism in terms of national policy. Racist attitudes and dispositions, being socially derived and confirmed entities, must be communicated, inculcated, and transmitted into dominant habits of mind and character. In this sense racist attitudes and dispositions do not differ from other attitudes and dispositions as to their formation and their inculcation into dominant habits of mind and character. It is with this in mind that I wish to consider Dewey's approach to habit, attitude, and disposition formation. After dealing with Dewey's notion of habit and its multifarious meanings, and with what I consider to be racist habits, attitudes, and dispositions, I should like to look into the part his own social group and environment could have played, if any, in shaping his personal attitudes and dispositions, mind and character as to the racial issues of his day. In other words, was Dewey's social environment one where racist ideas and notions florished? And if so, what effect could they have upon the young and impressionable of the community and upon young John? Did Dewey ever address himself in a direct fashion to the racial problem in his writing or action?

HABITS, ATTITUDES, AND DISPOSITIONS

According to Dewey, habits are outgrowths and functions of socio-environmental interaction. They are acquired arts that require the

cooperation of an individual organism and its social environment: "life signifies . . . a way of acting, environment or medium signifies what enters into this activity as a sustaining or frustrating condition."[1]

Man lives in a social environment. It is educative. Man's actions are dependent upon the social acceptance of others: their expectations, demands, approvals, and condemnations. In nurturing the immature members, the society everywhere instills habits of action attitudes and dispositions. Habits are formed, modified and determined by the mode of associated living when individuals partake in group participation. The "social environment forms the mental and emotional dispositions of behavior in individuals by engaging them in activities that arouse and strengthen certain impulses, that have certain purposes and entail certain consequences."[2] Habits are powers of modification, adjustment and adaptation. They consist in "the ability to use natural conditions as means to ends." They are means to "active control of the environment through control of the organs of action."[3]

Habits have certain "salient features": (i) all habits display mechanism or executive skill in the efficiency of doing; (ii) habits may be routine; or (iii) they may be intelligent. All habits are forms of executive skill, "of efficiency in doing" which involves mechanization: "Habit is impossible without setting up a mechanism of action, physiologically engrained, which operates 'spontaneously,' automatically, whenever the cue is given."[4]

---

[1] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 12.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

[4] *Ibid.*

In order to acquire mechanization, habits must contain a certain degree of plasticity. As concerns habit formation and flexibility, "plasticity is the capacity to retain and carry over from prior experience factors which modify subsequent activities. This signifies the capacity to acquire habits, or develop definite dispositions."[5] However, after habits are formed, plasticity in most instances becomes rigid, making habit "a mechanized activity hedged within a drab world."[6]

Habits by nature are conservative, inflexible. They are energies "organized in certain channels. When interfered with, it swells as resentment and as an avenging force." Dewey explains:

> It is the nature of a habit to involve ease in the accustomed line of activity. It is the nature of a readjusting of habit to involve an effort which is disagreeable--something to which a man has deliberately to hold himself. In other words, there is a tendency to identify the self--or to take interest--in what one has got used to, and to turn away the mind with aversion or irritation when an unexpected thing which involves an unpleasant modification of habit comes up. Since in the past one has done one's duty without having to face such a disagreeable circumstance, why not go on as one has been?[7]

Furthermore, habits may be "fixed", "bad", "routine", "intelligent". A habit may be fixed in two senses or meanings: (i) it may signify a projectile power that in addition to being well entrenched gives one resources on demand to meet novel situations or (ii) it may "mean rut, routine ways, with loss of freshness, openmindedness and originality."[8]

Habits are bad in two senses. A habit may be bad in the sense that (i) it is formed by forces which are external and mechanical to the individual--habits that become routine or (ii) it leads to

---

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 70.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[8] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 48.

undesirable action. The latter sense is explained in detail in a rather long but meaningful quotation. Here Dewey describes the force of unconsciously formed habits which "are active means, means that project themselves, energetic and dominating ways of acting."[9]

> A bad habit suggests an inherent tendency to action and also a hold, command over us. It makes us do things we are ashamed of, things which we tell ourselves we prefer not to do. It overrides our formal resolutions, our conscious decisions. When we are honest with ourselves we acknowledge that a habit has this power because it is so intimately a part of ourselves. It has a hold upon us because we are the habit.
>
> Our self-love, our refusal to face facts, combined perhaps with a sense of a possible better although unrealized self, leads us to eject the habit from the thought of ourselves and conceive it as an evil power which has somehow overcome us. We feed our conceit by recalling that the habit was not deliberately formed; we never intended to become. . . . And how can anything be deeply ourselves which developed accidentally, without set intention? These traits of a bad habit are precisely the things which are most instructive about all habits and about ourselves. They teach us that all habits are affections, that a predisposition formed by a number of specific acts is an immensely more intimate and fundamental part of ourselves than are vague, general, conscious choices. All habits are demands for certain kinds of activity; and they constitute the self. In any intelligible sense of the word will, they *are* will. They form our effective desires and they furnish us with our working capacities. They rule our thoughts, determining which shall pass from light into obscurity.[10]

Fortunately, habits are subject to change. They may change either by direct or indirect control of the environment. Dewey relishes the notion that man can consciously set up an environment which directly modifies or changes habit according to desire. For Dewey, this is the only meaningful way to change or modify bad habits.

Control of action or the projectile power of habit may occur in either of two ways: passively or actively. The passive sense of control consists of the motor phase of habit, whereas, the active sense of

---

[9]Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 47.

[10]*Ibid.*, p. 48.

control consist in habit's intellectual phase.

When adjustment is passive it is known as habituation. Habituated activity becomes routine activity. Habit is seen "as a change wrought in the organism."[11] In this sense of habit, adjustment becomes mere adaptation of activities to the social medium, a conformity to surroundings which negates one's ability to control means of accomplishing desired ends. Instead, one accommodates oneself to environmental factors. Our environment consists of things of which we become familiar. Familiar things give rise to a relatively fixed or routine habit of adjustment rendering action passive. This fixed or routine habit forms the foundation of adjustment and all subsequent adjustment uses it as a resource. Dewey equates such adjustment or adaptation with training, an external acceptance and "non-active" adaptation. Dewey holds such habits in contempt. They are bad, primitive, unintelligent, inflexible, etc., etc.

Intelligent habit is a mechanism of reciprocal adaptation or adjustment. It is habit at its best. It signifies the ability to effect future and desirable changes in the social medium: "Adaptation, in fine, is quite as much adaptation of the environment to our own activities as of our activities to the environment."[12] Intelligent habit possess resourcefulness, plasticity and variety. It projects a certain power for mental and moral disposition to action; it is possessed of intelligent methodology.

Intelligent habit is required as a part of "educative training". It is concerned not only with outer action but with the emotional and

---

[11] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 47.

[12] *Ibid.*

mental aspects of dispositions of behavior. It is here that Dewey explicitly distinguishes between habits which are concerned primarily with outer action and habits which consider not only outer action but mental and moral dispositions as well.

Intelligent habits are formulations of shared, conjoint, and common action. Such habits are attained by mutual cooperation. "Our intelligence is bound up, so far as its materials are concerned, with the community life of which we are a part."[13]

Even morality exists as "established, collective habit", "custom" or "folkways". Dewey looks to custom--established collective habit--as the supplier of "standards for personal activities."

> Customs in any case constitute moral standards. For they are active demands for certain ways of acting. Every habit creates an unconscious expectation. It forms a certain outlook. . . . It is the essence of routine to insist upon its own continuation. Breach of it is violation of right. Deviation from it is transgression.[14]

Dewey, moreover, makes qualitative distinctions between the use to which the terms habit, attitude, and disposition may be employed. Habits exhibit explicit qualities. Dispositions and attitudes are suggestive of "something latent, potential, something which requires a positive stimulus outside themselves to become active." The terms attitude and disposition are to be used to "denote positive forms of action which are released merely through removal of some counteracting 'inhibitory' tendency, and then become overt, we may employ them instead of the word habit to denote subdued, non-patent forms of the latter."[15]

---

[13] Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 314.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 75; Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 17.

[15] Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 41.

Disposition marks a tendency to action, a predisposition, a "readiness to act overtly in a specific fashion whenever opportunity is presented, this opportunity consisting in removal of the pressure due to the dominance of some overt habit"; whereas "attitude means some special case of a predisposition, the disposition waiting as it were to spring through an open door."[16]

Due to the "dynamic force of habit taken in connection with the continuity of habits," there is unity of will and deed, motive and act, character and conduct. The "Will" means "something practical and moving."[17] With disposition being a tendency to action, the right disposition produces the right act. Accordingly, with dispositions being habitual and persistent, acts are properly judged according to motives and consequences.[18] Moreover, when making judgments we must be content with tendencies to action. One must keep two related senses of tendency in mind: (i) habits or dispositions have causal efficiency or tendency and (ii) particular habits and dispositions are subject to intervening variables.

RACIST HABITS, ATTITUDES, AND DISPOSITIONS

There were and still are three forms of group racism in America: (i) social class groupings, (ii) ethnic or national groupings, and (iii) pigmentation groupings. My main concern will be with the latter, the grouping of persons according to skin pigmentation (black) in order to enforce policies and decisions made by whites for the sole purpose

---

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 46.

of subordinating its members to the dominant white majority.

The source of most alienation and fear in America is economically based. Racism as displayed in ideas, desires, habits, attitudes and dispositions of minds of the whites towards blacks is based upon fear whose root cause is economic. This is seen in the fact that religion, also based upon fear, was and is used to construe morality to justify the daily atrocities that whites commit against blacks in quest for economic security. Bertrand Russell points to the fear of competition in matters of economic import and its promotion of

> an active malevolence, both special ill-will directed to particular enemies and general impersonal pleasure in the misfortunes of others. It is customary to cover this over with fine phrases; about half of conventional morality is a cloak for it. . . . It is shown in a thousand ways, great and small: in the glee with which people repeat and believe scandal, in the unkind treatment of criminals in spite of clear proof that better treatment would have more effect in reforming them, in the unbelievable barbarity with which all white races treat negroes, and in the gusto with which old ladies and clergymen pointed out the duty of military service to young men during the War. Even children may be the object of wanton cruelty: David Copperfield and Oliver Twist are by no means imaginary. This active malevolence is the worst feature of human nature and the one which it is most necessary to change if the world is to grow happier. Probably this one cause has more to do with war than all the economic and political causes put together.[19]

The cause of this fear "is based upon life-and-death competition" and may be explained as a socio-psychological phenomenon.

> Most people have in the background of their minds a haunting fear of ruin; this is especially true of people who have children. The rich fear that Bolsheviks will confiscate their investments; the poor fear that they will lose their job or their health. Everyone is engaged in the frantic pursuit of 'security' and imagines that this is to be achieved by keeping potential enemies in subjection. It is in moments of panic that cruelty becomes most widespread and most atrocious.[20]

---

[19] Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian*, ed. by Paul Edwards (London: Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957), p. 61.

[20] *Ibid.*

Racism is born of "fear and hate" and mankind has in Barzun's words, a "latent readiness for race-thinking--the easy, vulgar method for dealing abstractly with a threat to comfort or pocketbook."[21] The "morality" of white America as displayed towards blacks is based mostly upon the fear and hatred of economic competition. And, no sphere of American life is free from it. Religion because of its strong theoretical and psychological hold upon the minds of men became morally or spiritually the most racist institution in America. There is a strong correlation between fundamentalism and racism where religion is concerned; this is especially the case with the Christian religion.

> You find as you look around the world that every single bit of progress in humane feeling, every improvement in the criminal law, every step towards better treatment of the coloured races, or every mitigation of slavery, every moral progress that there has been in the world, has been consistently opposed by the organized Churches of the world. I say quite deliberately that the Christian religion, as organized in its Churches, has been and still is the principal enemy of moral progress in the world.[22]

Religion being primarily based upon fear became a psychological aid and often a justification for racial hate. All of white America's Christian sects aiming at the "common good" became united on at least one front. The hatred of a common enemy is a bond, since there is a tendency to love those who hate what we hate: "We love those who hate our enemies, and if we have no enemies there would be very few people whom we should love."[23] This attitude is readily seen amongst Europeans and Canadians of various backgrounds: they have an ethnic hatred for the white American; thus, they sympathize with black American whom they

---

[21]Jacques Barzun, *Race: A Study in Superstition* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. xix.

[22]Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian*, p. 15.

[23]Bertrand Russell, *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1954), p. 169.

think a common enemy of white America. The relationship between white Europeans and Canadians and black Americans is more or less superficial. They never really consider the black man's true emotions for he is a means to their end--a false sense of moral superiority and what economic benefit it may bring. Their efforts are an attempt to display a moral superiority over and against the white American, while at the same time treating blacks within their midst with an excruciating and condescending contempt. In other words, not feeling competent to compete with Americans in matters of economic importance and other realms, where this active malevolence originates, they use this false morality as a lever.

Fears which lead to racial hatred are of three basic types: (i) where one group is competing with another for desirable lands, jobs, or other economic advantages or women; (ii) when a minority endeavors to preserve its own integrity as a socio-cultural group within a larger population, where it resists the efforts of the larger society to assimilate it in an attempt to achieve a high degree of "integration"; (iii) in time of crisis, hostility towards a foreign nation or minority group within a nation is a frequent and effective means of unifying a nation or particular groups within a nation. Whites when they perceive a situation as fearful between themselves and blacks can become a monolithic group forgetting ethnic differences and achieving an inner unity and solidarity that at other times is lacking: hatred of a common enemy is, indeed, a bond, since there is a strong inclination to love--if only momentarily--those who hate what we hate.

Racist attitudes and dispositions, minds and characters that are created by such fears and hatreds take on three personality types: dominative, aversive-normal, aversive-extreme. These forms are highly

influenced by other socio-cultural considerations: geographic region--how long and at what stage of life the racist resided there; population density and community interracial composition; frequency of interracial contact. These factors play a considerable role as to intensity of racial attitudes and dispositions. However, one must be cautious in that these distinctions are not very clear-cut, since each racist may use other forms in addition to the one most characteristic. This is seen in the fact that the potential racist must confront, directly or indirectly, the object of his hatred. The dominative racist may be found in large but ever decreasing numbers in the Southern region of America. He is erroneously taken to be the 'typical' American racist. He meets the object of his hatred in direct experience; this type of racist is prerequisite to aversive types. The hated object must be confronted before the racist displays aversion or irritation.

"Heat" characterizes the dominative racist position toward the object of his racial hatred: the black man's body. The heat is applied by use of violent force whenever the threat is thought sufficient to warrant such action. The racist in such circumstances will try to punish the object of his hatred; forms of punishment may consist of paranoid ravings, the insensate rage of lynch mobs, bombing of Sunday schools, and the recent and continuing "white backlash." The domination of the black body becomes an obsession of social necessity: "Hate implies a kind of love, or at least an inability to rid the mind of obsessions with the hated other."[24] It is ironic that the racist must have his hated object as a preventative necessity, that

---

[24]Joel Kovel, *White Racism: A Psychohistory* (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 57.

is, to prevent himself from fading into nothingness.

Of the aversive type, there are two kinds: normal and extreme. The aversive-normal is the most common of today's racist types. He lives in relatively close physico-geographical proximity to the hated object; has frequent occasion to encounter the object in direct or vicarious experience. As long as he can think of himself in a superior power position his reaction to the hated thing is normally of mild aversion. However, when threatened, indirectly or directly, he is more likely than not to turn away and wall himself off from the object rather than resort to the role behavior of the dominative type. However, when caught in his game, he will, if threatened to the "extreme", regress to the dominative type.

He considers himself mentally and morally superior to the black and keeps a respectable distance for fear of contamination. Gestures of an unconscious occurance gives more data than he is willing to divulge or admit on a conscious level, for he is such a highly principled individual. Dewey could never be more correct: "A man may give himself away in a look or a gesture. Character can be read through the medium of individual acts."[25]

Among racists, the aversive-normal is by far the most sophisticated. He is a smooth operator with a stock of knowledge based upon personal and vicarious experiences practically fit for any situation encountered. What dealings that do occur between the aversive-normal and the hated thing are kept on an impersonal, remote, and logical plane; this is how his personal life is administered, there is very little break

---

[25]Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 38.

between theory and practice. His racism is mostly of a covert nature; he skillfully manipulates behind the scenes to forbid and punish the hated thing.

The aversive-extreme is perhaps the most racist of all personality types. In this type, the racist feeling is, in many if not in the majority of cases, below the level of consciousness and is founded primarily upon vicarious experience. This is due mostly to the fact that he lives in regions which are rather isolated, thus, preventing or reducing the chances of direct contact with the object of his hatred to practially nil, giving more opportunity to indulge in fantasy and illusion as to his racial and moral superiority. However, when confronted by the object of his hatred, he is not looking for truth in the form of fact but is seeking "truth" as "satisfaction" of preconceived notions. (He always insists that he wants the truth but, in fact, is seeking fictions that make him feel more comfortable and self-assured.) When physically approached by blacks, he is just as likely as to be utterly horrified, a horror based upon little or no personal experience with black people. When displaying racial prejudices towards blacks this personality type resorts to the full range of defense mechanisms: repression, projection, reaction-formation, fixation, and regression. One of his first responses is to project the claim of racism laid against him onto the object of his prejudice in order to escape the implications of that person's claim--the institution of a counter-claim. Being a man of apparently high moral principles and not being able to face the immoral consequences of his act, he must deny such "bad" habits, for nothing so irreligious could ever become a part of him.

MORAL HABITS OF RACIST

Man has a natural inclination to seek ethical justifications for the ideas, desires, habits, attitudes, and dispositions by which he lives. And in matters of a social nature--economics, politics, morality, religion, education--Western man's aspirations have, in the main, been limited to the interests of some one group, such as his own sex, class, nation, or pigmentation. Concerning these vested group-interests, there are three different but related ethical attitudes he may adopt: (i) the interests of mankind are, in the long run, identical with those of his group, although members of other groups, in their selfish blindness, are unable to see this; (ii) his group alone counts in the realm of ends, and the rest are to be regarded as mere means towards satisfying the desires of his own group; (iii) while he should only take account of the interests of his group, a man belonging to another group should similarly take account only of the interest of his. The first of these ethical attitudes is known as "enlightened imperialism". This attitude produces ethical opposites: superior-inferior, civilized-savages, Christian-pagan, American-European, Canadian-American, white-black, and what not. This ethical attitude was displayed by John Dewey when he attacked the immorality of white European nations and their involvement in the First World War.

The second ethical attitude confines the "good" to a particular group with the rest of mankind being either obstacles to be swept away or means to be utilized to the best advantage of those who alone have importance as regards ends: man-animal, upper class-middle and lower classes, white-black,

Thirdly, one's duty is to one's group. Here we narrow the universal claim to the "good" to that of particular groups; there are "goods"

for your group and there are "goods" for my group. "Right" conduct, the means of realizing the specific "good", no longer produces the maximum good in general, but maximum good of a particular group. It is customary for a racist to use only one of the above "ethical" explanations; however, he may use a combination if necessary.

Racism as displayed by whites towards blacks in America has developed and used the above ethical justifications. Ethically, whites have become a monolithic group when confronted with social issues of a "black and white" nature. All social conflict between the two races usually may be seen in terms of interests which oppose each group to the other. The discussed ethical attitudes are contained in the various religious dogmas of the Christian churches of America and Western civilization.

Enlightened imperialism, where the church is concerned, is a doctrine which simply states that the ethical interests of mankind are identical with those of a particular sect or religion, other sects and religions are blinded by a lack of "light" in their dogmas. Since blacks are inherently and spiritually inferior in matters of civilized religion, it is in their interest to follow the lead of the chosen people; through association, there will occur in due time an assimilation. This attitude is very prominent amongst "integrationists." The missionary is an example of the enlightened imperialist. He goes among the heathen spreading the word of God: "All people are equal in the eyes of God. Let the light of God shine upon your dark soul and in due course your life shall blossom into full-flower as a child of God." In a similar way the white displays a sense of morality towards the black although such morality is of a condescending nature, there is the

possibility and hope that in due time the black will eventually realize equality in all things social.

According to the means-ends approach, whites alone are important in the realm of ends. Blacks being half-men and half-brutes are to be means to the realization of the ends of a "higher" life. The "good" is that of a particular group, and the rest of mankind are mere means or are obstacles to be swept away.

This approach can take an amoral nature. It negates the existence of the black as a fully potential religious being. God made one (black) to serve the other (white). This end is a part of the Grand Design of God; blacks are not quite people in His eyes. Therefore, they do not count where ends are concerned; they are means to be used in the realizations of God's revelations as interpreted by the chosen people. If the blacks pose as obstacles to the realization of God's design, then they must suffer whatever punishment God chooses the chosen people to administer.

The third approach in an ethical justification of racism is that of polite aversion: one's duty is to one's group. Whites are to stick to their own kind, and the same applies to blacks. This is the most commonly expressed attitude among aversive types.

That the third ethical approach is most typical can be seen in the fact that white churches throughout America forcefully introduced their religion upon the souls of black folk. However, it is here, in the church itself, that racism has become perhaps the most institutionalized. Irrespective of the "moralistic" actions on behalf of approaches one and three, they are taken up primarily as gestures of proving the white man's own worth in the eyes of God.

> Although it would remain unconscious of it, the American conscience received one of its greatest stimulations from the presence of the degraded black people within its midst. The highest, purest, and most valued of what the North--and eventually all of American culture--gained from the aversive flight from blackness, was the purity of its conscience and ideals. Not that the white conscience has been especially helpful to blacks; usually, it has been applied to appease white guilt and foster white virtue, while strangely ignorning the real human being who is its supposed object.[26]

There is at least one truth in the principles of psychoanalysis: the patient must become aware of his unconscious motivation to act before he can deal, if he so chooses, with its consequences or effects. White Americans are becoming more aware of their racist natures and suprisingly a large number have begun to close the gap in their moral-schizophrenia. However, this is not the case with the other racist nations of Western civilization.

Morality for profit is prevalent among Canadian racist. Their condescending "love" of blacks is a front for "moral" and economic profit. The false sense of moral superiority is seen as a lever to pry economic benefits in terms of investment capital from the "morally inferior" by laying claim to morally superior treatment of blacks, especially black Americans. However, when one examines the economic implications of this "moral" superiority one finds a nation thriving on the fruits of racism.

DEWEY THE PARTICIPANT

Dewey strongly subscribed to the view that philosophy and philosophers should be concerned primarily with the pressing and urgent issues and problems within the socio-cultural environment in which they live. They are to use the method of inquiry to transform "an indeterminate situation into one that is so determinate in its constituent

---

[26]Kovel, *White Racism: A Psychohistory*, pp. 198-199.

distinctions and relations as to convert the elements of the original situation into a unified whole"[27] by providing solutions in the form of plans and policies to be tested in action. As has been demonstrated, Dewey participated in and supported a few efforts at the amelioration of the social evils existent within the United States. For these efforts, he became known to many as America's greatest liberal educator and social reformer.

However, there was one problem that had been urgent and pressing from the year 1619: that of white America's ill treatment of black Americans, which Dewey avoided. Why did Dewey practically ignore one of the most important problems of the American scene, if not the most important in terms of potential threat to the American ideal? Nowhere in his major or minor publications is there a specific mention of this problem, the poverty of rotten and racist minds. We may proceed to the particular experiences in Dewey's life which may give added insight into his attitudes and dispositions towards what is considered by many to be America's greatest social shame and evil, a problem which split a nation bringing it to civil war, a problem which in no significant way has been approached--until recently--to prevent further civil war as the decade of 1960-1970 has clearly shown.

It is with a statement by Harold Laski that I begin a somewhat cursory analysis into the socio-cultural background of John Dewey and his treatment or non-treatment of one of America's most glaring and pressing difficulties.

> The postulates of any social theory are, in fact, value-judgments born of the experience of the individual thinker who makes them. . . . From Plato onwards, the more we know of the thinker's personal history the more fully we can explain

---

[27] Dewey, *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*, pp. 104-105.

> the causes which led to the assumptions upon which he based his work; and those assumptions are always the result of the view he takes of what society ought to be like.[28]

DEWEY AND THE FORMATIVE YEARS

John Dewey was born in Burlington, Vermont on October 20, 1859 to Archibald Sprague and Lucina Artemesia Rich Dewey, both were from traditional New England farm families. John's father, Archibald, came from plebeian pioneer stock. He received little, if any, formal schooling beyond the elementary level. He married late in life a woman some twenty years his junior. According to Jane Dewey, Archibald was intellectually conservative, but was even more so concerning matters of conventional religion.[29] He moved to Burlington from the farm to run a grocery business. His attitude towards economic and educational matters seemed somewhat slack. Discussions were frequent at Archibald's store on the pressing, urgent social issues of the day. Late in life he served in the Union army during the Civil War, an experience that he detested due to his contempt for the Republicans and their leader Abe Lincoln.

Dewey's mother, Lucina, as his father, was born and reared on a traditional farm in New England's Vermont. Lucina was from a more economically prominent family than that of Archibald's. Her grandfather was a United States congressman; her father a lay judge; and her brothers were college graduates. She was religious to the extreme. She was very ambitious for her family--the opposite of her easy-going

---

[28]Harold Laski, *The State in Theory and Practice* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1935), pp. 30-31.

[29]Jane Dewey, "Biography of John Dewey," p. 5.

husband. Her temperament may be described as intense, and possessing a missionary zeal.

Dewey grew up a shy and reticent youth "somewhat isolated from the current of life about"[30] him under the tutelage of two socially conservative parents "in a rural community typical of a multitude of others in New England where matters of religion and politics maintained their traditional importance in everyday life."[31] With the exception of being shy and reticent, John Dewey's youth was not in any appreciable sense distinguishable from that of his mates except that there was too much emphasis upon religious matters: "His upbringing was conventional, he was religiously devout, and he seems to have accepted the values of his environment rather than rebelled against them."[32] Sidney Hook in his book *John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait* has this comment to make concerning the moulding and forming of permanent dispositions and attitudes which shaped Dewey's mind and character.

> The Vermont and the New England of Dewey's boyhood and youth are gone. But he still carries with him the traces of its social environment, not as memories but as habits, deep preferences, and an ingrained democratic bias.[33]

As Dewey repeatedly points out in his philosophical, psychological, and educational writings, the unconscious attitudes and dispositions of the herd which are dominant are instilled as a matter of routine social participation on the part of the immature individual. The group's

---

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[31] Curtis and Boultwood, *A Short History of Educational Ideas*, p. 463.

[32] Bernstein, *John Dewey*, p. 24.

[33] Hook, *John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait*, pp. 4-5.

socio-cultural base "furnishes the basic nurture of even the most insistently schooled youth."[34]

Curtis and Boultwood give the following description of the community consciousness that permeated the attitudes and dispositions of the people resident in Burlington.

> The religious bond was the oldest persistent factor, but the determination to survive as individual, independent communities had generated a widespread interest in politics, not merely as a topic for intelligent conversation, but as a matter which concerned the community and which every individual had a duty to understand. John Dewey heard the shrewd, lively comments and discussions in his father's shop, and he was able to see the strength and power of group consciousness in the varied activities and interrelations in a small society.[35]

For his education, Dewey attended a public school whose curriculum consisted of the traditional subjects of the day which were taught by dull and unimaginative instructors. Dewey's elementary and secondary school experience was formal and strict and emphasized the virtues of Puritanism. Again, I wish to quote from Curtis and Boultwood:

> The strongly Puritan communities of New England had contributed much to the moral and intellectual development of the new America by their recognition of the value of elementary education. Their children had always been taught to read because their religion demanded the individual's direct reference to the Bible in establishing his relations with his God. The strict principles of Dewey's pilgrim forefathers had grown no softer with the easing of life as the new continent prospered and the communities imposed adult standards on their young people. . . . the typical New England village school was the epitome of formal desk-learning and strict discipline--probably much the same as the school the Pilgrim Fathers knew in England.[36]

What were the habits or practices and beliefs of Dewey's particular social group concerning the issue of slavery, an issue which De Tocqueville and others considered the supreme ill to the preservation

---

[34]Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 17.

[35]Curtis and Boultwood, *A Short History of Education Ideas*, pp. 463-464.

[36]*Ibid.*, p. 463.

of the then young nation?[37] In other words, what were the habits, ideas, desires, attitudes, and dispositions of this typical New England community toward the plight of the negro?

It may be instructive to analyze sections of a chapter from De Tocqueville's classic *The Republic of America, and Its Political Institutions, Reviewed and Examined* entitled "Situation of the Black Population in the United States, and Dangers which Its Presence Threatens the Whites." De Tocqueville gives the most comprehensive statement of his time which is currently being recognized as perhaps the most illuminating statement of any time pertaining to the habits, ideas, desires, and dispositions which permeate racist minds and characters in America and Western civilization in general. De Tocqueville sees in racism the supreme ill threatening America's internal stability.

De Tocqueville explains clearly and concisely many of the conceptions of American racism with its regional distinctions which have only recently been acknowledged or "discovered" by social scientists. He states that economic greed was the root cause of slavery and racism in America; Christianity was deliberately distorted to fit the needs of a new socio-economic order by attaching a nonhuman quality to those of a darker skin pigmentation; legal barriers may fall, but the morality and manners of the white racist does not change; the intensity of racism increases directly proportional to the distance from the hated object due to fear of competition for the fruits of labor.

Slavery and its accompanying debasement in America took on a new turn as opposed to that which has existed in Europe since the time of

---

[37]Alexis De Tocqueville, *The Republic of the United States of America, and Its Political Institutions, Reviewed and Examined* (Cincinnati: H. W. Derby & Co., 1851), p. 386.

the Greeks. It was inextricably and fatally tied to the pigmentation of a person's skin to the extent that there had become a "natural" bond or association of black skin with the status of servitude.

> . . . the abstract and transient fact of slavery is fatally united to the physical and permanent fact of colour. The tradition of slavery dishonours the race, and the peculiarity of the race perpetuates the tradition of slavery . . . the negro transmits the eternal mark of his ignominy to all his descendants; and although the law may abolish slavery, God alone can obliterate the traces of its existence.[38]

> The modern slave differs from his master not only in his condition, but in his origin. You may set the negro free, but you cannot make him otherwise than an alien to the European. Nor is this all; we scarcely acknowledge the common features of mankind in this child of debasement whom slavery has brought among us. His physiognomy is to our eyes hideous, his understanding weak, his tastes low; and we are almost inclined to look upon him as a being intermediate between man and brutes.[39]

The religious connotations are clear. God made the black man inferior to be used by those who are by "design" superior. In terms of maturity, the black man is a "child of debasement whom slavery"--an act of God--"has brought among us" "and we are almost inclined to look upon him as a being intermediate between man and brutes."

The Christian religion and church reinstituted slavery into America after legally abolishing it in other countries; the Christian church assisted in the institution of slavery, condoned it, and perpetuated its existence.[40] De Tocqueville ventures further to explain in somewhat abbreviated fashion the extent of racism that existed within the church itself and what part such ramifications played upon the mannerisms of the American people.

---

[38] *Ibid.*

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 389.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 387.

> . . . although they are allowed to invoke the same Divinity as the whites, it must be at a different altar, and in their own churches with their own clergy. The gates of heaven are not closed against those unhappy beings; but their inferiority is continued to the very confines of the other world. When the negro is defunct, his bones are cast aside, and the distinction of conditions prevail even in the equality of death.[41]

Such treatment of blacks is justified and reinforced in religious teachings to the extent that it becomes "natural" to think that this is so, and what the imagination thinks natural it will try to realize in fact. This is the greatest difficulty facing the eradication of racism in America--the institutionalized racism which implants racist attitudes and dispositions into the minds and characters of whites.

That racist attitudes and dispositions permeate the minds and characters of whites De Tocqueville readily recognizes. Furthermore, he recognizes that certain legal barriers had been proclaimed illegal in certain sections of the country; however, the racism in such places seemed to be more intense and brutal than where it was still legal: "The prejudice which repels the negroes seems to increase in proportion as they are emancipated, and inequality is sanctioned by the manner while it is effaced from the laws of the country."[42] He continues:

> It is true, that in the north of the Union marriages may be legally contracted between negroes and whites, but public opinion would stigmatize a man who should connect himself with a negress as infamous, and it would be difficult to meet with a single instance of such a union. The electoral franchise has been conferred upon the negroes in almost all the states in which slavery has been abolished; but if they come forward to vote, their lives are in danger. If oppressed, they may bring an action at law, but they will find none but whites among their judges; and although they may legally serve as jurors, prejudice repulses them from that office. The same schools do not receive the child of the black and of the European.[43]

---

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 390.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 389.

Moreover, De Tocqueville lays the foundations for the three types of personality that racists display throughout America and the world: dominative, aversive-normal, and aversive-extreme.

> Whosoever has inhabited the United States, must have perceived, that in those parts of the Union in which negroes are no longer slaves, they have in nowise drawn nearer to the whites. On the contrary, the prejudice of the race appears to be stronger in the states which have abolished slavery, than in those where it still exists; and nowhere is it so intolerant as in those states where servitude has never been known.[44]

If De Tocqueville was right, Dewey grew to adulthood in a town of aversive-extreme racists, the most intense racists in America. Burlington, Vermont was a small rural and isolated New England town. There were no blacks in Burlington so competition for economic benefits was non-existent between people of different pigmentation; the residents had no opportunity to have direct contact with black people and their "knowledge" of the black experience was vicarious and stereotypical; being religiously dogmatic, they were convinced that their habits and beliefs were part of God's Grand Design.

Dewey's parents and other community members were conservative on all social issues, especially where religion was concerned. Dewey was religiously devout; his ideas, desires, habits, attitudes and dispositions concerning matters of race were in harmony with those of his social group and based upon vicarious experiences. However, one is inclined to agree with Dewey in that one need not be a permanent, unalterable product of his social environment; that is, habits which are intelligent and not merely routine may be altered by a strong-willed individual with proper and necessary environmental adjustment

---

[44] *Ibid.*

accompanied by socio-cultural reinforcement. Furthermore, Dewey is of the confirmed belief that habits, attitudes and dispositions lead to action, especially in instances where there is a unity of motive and action, desire and deed, idea and results or consequences. "Handsome is that handsome does. By their fruits shall ye *know* them."[45] Dewey's colleagues and disciples have claimed that if any one had achieved a unity of thought and action it was he.

RACIST IDEAS LEAD TO RACIST ACTION

I think it would be beneficial to look more closely into those areas of social reform that Dewey experienced as a participant which had definite racial overtones. There are several instances which may provide us with material to examine the racial attitudes of John Dewey: Dewey's actual experience of the Civil War as a young and impressionable child; his acceptance of an invitation to the First National Conference of 1909 and his subsequent whole-hearted support of President Woodrow Wilson in his effort to "save the world for democracy"; his philosophical writings as these deal with urgent, pressing social problems in the American scene.

Dewey's father was called into the services of the Union army during the Civil War to serve in a unit stationed in northern Virginia. His mother moved the family to Virginia during the last year of the War so as to be closer to her husband. Jane Dewey describes the experience and its "more positive broadening influences." "This was an almost heroic move for a woman of those days and the privations in this

---

[45]Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, p. 156.

devastated district made a deep impression on the boys, young as they were."[46] What was this deep impression, this lasting impression upon the ideas, desires, attitudes and dispositions of the then young and very impressionable Dewey boys? And was there sufficient reinforcement from the social environment to make them permanent parts of mind and character, consciously or unconsciously? Did Dewey come to love the oppressed black or was there a reinforcement of the rabid racism which in all probability permeated his community's social life?

It is a known fact that Dewey's father disliked the Republican party and its institution of the Civil War, a war which he often spoke of to his sons.[47] The Republican party ran in the election of 1856 upon a compromise ticket which appealed to the heavily populated white North: "The platform of the new Party aimed at excluding slavery from all Territories; on other points it revived the doctrines of the Whigs, the most important of which was high tariffs."[48]

Dewey's father, being a businessman of sorts, more than likely favored the high tariffs, as this was the rule among New Englanders. What seemed to have disturbed him was the Republican's talk of freeing the slaves during the Civil War. This meant economic competition with blacks on a more equal footing, a position which all whites hate.

In January of 1909, it was decided that "a call of a national conference on the Negro question"[49] be issued to those in sympathy with

---

[46]Jane Dewey, "Biography of John Dewey," p. 7.

[47]*Ibid.*, pp. 6-7, 26.

[48]Bertrand Russell, *Freedom versus Organization 1776-1914*, p. 61.

[49]William Koren Katz, ed., *Proceedings of the National Negro Conference 1909* (New York: Arno and The New York Times, 1969), p. 71.

the black man. The date chosen was February 12, 1909, the centennial of the birth of Abraham Lincoln. The call was precipitated by the number of riots which occurred the preceding year. One such riot took place in Springfield, Illinois, the hometown of Abraham Lincoln, where "a mob containing many of the town's 'best' citizens raged for two days, killed and wounded scores of Negroes, and drove thousands from the city."[50] The causes of the riots were the disfranchisement of blacks by all Southern States with the assistance of the Supreme Court of America; and the general lawlessness of whites towards blacks--open attacks on men, women, and children. The call was signed by some of America's leading liberals and social reformers of the day, included were the names of Jane Addams and John Dewey.

The conference was held on May 30, 31 and June 1 at Cooper Union. Dewey was not only in attendance, he gave an extempore and ambiguous address, not a carefully thought out and worded document to be published. It consisted in a scientific discourse on the doctrine of heredity and race. This seems somewhat strange, for up to this time in his career, he had never written about, let alone spoken of, the black man, nor were there any blacks in attendance at his world famous Dewey School. The gist of his less than two page address was that acquired characteristics are not hereditary and, therefore, not transferable.

For Dewey "there is no 'inferior' race" and every individual should "have the same opportunities of social environment and personality as those of a more favored race."[51] Dewey's concluding point is most

---

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 72.

[51] *Ibid.*

shocking: It is the responsibility of society to provide the social opportunities for blacks but not from any sense of *moral commitment* to them as equal human beings.

The question of black opportunity is not one of moral consideration but one of "a strictly scientific standpoint." Morally, Dewey does not seem to be even an enlightened imperialist where blacks are concerned; for the question of social, economic, political, and educational opportunity are to be "conceived from a strictly scientific standpoint leaving out all sentimental and all moral consideration."[52] Blacks are means and do not figure positively into the realm of ends. The good of the minority is seen in terms of that which the majority who are socially superior deem as their good.

> All points of skill are represented in every race, from the inferior individual to the superior individual; and a society that does not furnish the environment and education and the opportunity of all kinds which will bring out and make effective the superior ability wherever it is born, is not merely doing an injustice to that particular race and to those individuals, but is doing an injustice to itself for it is depriving itself of just that much of social capital.[53]

If society does not help the niggers to self-actualization, the dominant group is the one who will suffer because there will be less "social capital" to exploit.

At first this would seem to be a direct contradiction to the values of a man who states that the "moral and social quality of conduct are, in the last analysis, identical with each other."[54] Dewey persists

---

[52] *Ibid.*

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 357-358.

in his claim that "morals has to do with all activity into which alternative possibilities enter. For wherever they enter a difference between better and worse arises."[55]

> Morals concern nothing less than the whole character, and the whole character is identical with the man in all his concrete makeup and manifestations. To possess virtue does not signify to have cultivated a few nameable and exclusive traits; it means to be fully and adequately what one is capable of becoming through association with others in all the offices of life.[56]

There is no contradiction in Dewey's approach to the white man's black problem. He is simply without morals where the black man is concerned, amoral. Blacks were never a part of Dewey's Burlington, his Vermont, his New England, etc.

Mary Ovington gives the overall effect of the First National Negro Conference:

> We have had five conferences since 1909, but I doubt whether any have been so full of questioning surprise, amounting swiftly to enthusiasm, on the part of the white people in attendance. These men and women, engaged in religious, social and educational work, for the first time met the Negro who demands, not a pittance, but his full rights in the commonwealth. They received a stimulating shock and one which they enjoyed. They did not want to leave the meeting. We conferred all the time, formally and informally, and the Association gained in those days many of the earnest and uncompromising men and women who have since worked unfalteringly in its cause.[57]

John Dewey was not among those "earnest and uncompromising men and women who have since worked unfalteringly in" the cause of the black man. Was it not Dewey who claimed that "manners are but minor morals" and that "in major morals, conscious instruction is likely to be efficacious only in the degree in which it falls in with the general

---

[55] Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 278.

[56] Dewey, *Democracy and Education* , p. 358.

[57] Ovington, *How the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Began*, p. 4.

'walk and conversation' of those who constitute the child's social environment."?[58] Dewey had never had contact with black people before and this was the only recorded instance in which he ever did. The confrontation with black bodies which were militant in their demands for a full share in the rights of America, might not have impressed a New Englander with a bible school mentality. Instead of assisting the oppressed black as he had the white European immigrant, John Dewey turned away and walled himself off from the racial problem.

Dewey is convinced "that conduct and character are strictly correlative" and that

> Continuity, consistency, throughout a series of acts is the expression of the enduring unity of attitudes and habits. Deeds hang together because they proceed from a single and stable self. Customary morality tends to neglect or blur the connection between character and action; the essence of reflective morals is that it is conscious of the existence of a persistent self and of the part it plays in what is externally done.[59]

For Dewey there is a conscious unity of mind and action, character and conduct.

That Dewey was consistent in his racism is seen from his attitude towards blacks during the War to "save the world for democracy." As stated earlier, Dewey supported President Woodrow Wilson's war efforts. His plea was for the benefit of other nations and peoples; for America by being a successful experiment was the example which others should follow. Here, Dewey completely ignores the plight of the black man, a plight which he had a chance to recognize by attending the first meeting of the National Negro Conference. As he proclaimed that America was

---

[58]Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 18.

[59]Dewey and Tufts, *Ethics*, p. 183.

a harmonious and united nation with no racial turmoil--which applied superficially to those people of European stock--during the period of three decades (1890-1920), there were over thirty-five hundred blacks publicly lynched in America; the State of Georgia on January 1, 1909 had "rounded out a few confederacy by disfranchising the Negro, after the manner of all the other Southern States";[60] the black man could not vote which was a reinstatement of taxation without representation. These issues were supported by Dewey's mentor, Woodrow Wilson.

There were hundreds of thousands of black soldiers who fought in World War I to save the world for democracy--a democracy from which they were excluded at home by white Americans. Blacks were recruited into and trained in all black units under white leadership. They fought with distinction. However, after the war they were rewarded with the atrocities of the "Red Summer of 1919". James Weldon Johnson gives this account of the summer of disillusionment and frustration which eventually led to rioting across America.

> The Red Summer of 1919 broke in fury. The colored people throughout the country were disheartened and dismayed. The great majority had trustingly felt that, because they had cheerfully done their bit in the war, conditions for them would be better. The reverse seemed to be the case. There was one case, at least, in which a returned Negro was lynched *because of the fact* that he wore the uniform of a United States soldier. The Ku Klux Klan had reached ascendancy. Reports from overseas had come back giving warning that the returned Negro soldiers would be a dangerous element and a menace; that these black men had been engaged in killing white men, and, so, had lost the sense of inviolability of a white man's life; that they had frequently been given the treatment accorded only to white men in America, and above all, that many of them had been favorably regarded by white women. One of the chief recruiting slogans of the Klan was the necessity of united action to keep these men in their place.[61]

---

[60]Ovington, *How the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Began*, p. 2.

[61]James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way* (New York: Viking Press, 1933), p. 341.

Where was Dewey, America's foremost social reformer, radical liberal, and the philosopher of the "common man"? It becomes apparent that Dewey's common man was the white immigrant--old and new--which resided in Burlington during his youth. Hook's statement is very suggestive: "If William James may be called the philosopher of the underdog, John Dewey is surely the philosopher of the plain man--of the millions who are neither on top nor on bottom."[62] Were democracy, equality, and liberty for whites only? Were blacks mere means and not to be counted in terms of ends? Was Dewey an aversive racist with an attitude of amorality towards the blacks? This seems to be the case.

Dewey was consistent in his negative attitude towards minorities: white ethnics, blacks, browns, and yellows. This was especially the case where minorities were "disruptive" of the "intelligent" majority. Dewey's attitude towards militant and vocal minorities was seen in the case of his union activities; however, this is by no means inclusive. There are the Polish, Chinese, and Russian experiences. Dewey was invited by the Chinese Lecture Association to be its Eminent Foreigner of the year in 1920. He was a special and highly esteemed guest of the Chinese people. Dewey rewarded the Chinese people by becoming an informer for the U. S. State Department. He sent a report on "Bolshevism in China" to one Colonel Drysdale, then military attache of U. S. Legation in China, a report in which Drysdale describes the qualifications of the spy.

> Dr. Dewey has made a special study of this subject in China and has had unusual opportunity of getting into touch with the element in China that may be considered as radical, I know of no

---

[62]Hook, *John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait*, p. 17.

one any where, better qualified to report on this important matter than Dr. Dewey.[63]

Dewey reported that he had "seen no direct evidence of Bolshevism in China."

> I landed in Shanghai the first of May last year. In the year and a half since I have been in nine provinces, including the capitals, though much the greater part of the time has been spent in Peking. I have been in Shanghai four times, however, Hanchow twice, and spent two months in Nanking having been there twice. I feel the surer of my belief that Bolshevism is lacking in China because I have been in close contact with the teachers, writers and students who are sometimes called Bolshevists, and who in fact are quite radical in their social and economic ideas.[64]

Moreover,

> The sum of the whole matter is that the intellectual class is radical in its beliefs and much interested in all plans of social reform. But it is a small class, practically with little influence, and not concerned to organize itself to get more. The whole social and economic background of Bolshevism as a practical going concern is lacking.[65]

Dewey the enlightened imperialist felt quite content to supply this confidential report to army intelligence which is now in the National Archives' Record Group 59 after being declassified on 22 July 1960. Could it be that Dewey had no use for yellow people either?

John Dewey had earlier worked for the U. S. Military Intelligence concerning an internal social matter during the months of April through August of 1918. He was in charge of "securing some well-trained post-graduate students from Columbia University to undertake a study during

---

[63] *The Dewey Newsletter*, VI ([Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, October, 1972]), p. 7--see Appendix A.

[64] *Ibid.*

[65] *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

the summer months of conditions among an immigrant group in Philadelphia."[66] The people to be reported upon were a group of Poles.

> The Poles were selected. The main object of the inquiry was to ascertain forces and conditions which operate against the development of a free and domocratic life among the members of this group, to discover the influences which kept them under external oppression and control. To quote from a letter written by Mr. Barnes: 'The idea would be to work out a practical plan, based upon first-hand knowledge, to eliminate forces alien to democratic internationalism and to promote American ideals in accordance with the principles announced by President Wilson in his various public communications.[67]

Dewey and his spy-ring, which included a Polish immigrant, one Mrs. Levitas, operated out of a house in the Polish district. Moreover, Dewey was called to Washington to deliver their findings.

It is ironic that Dewey wrote in *The Nation* on March 14, 1918, prior to his spying activity that America was "truly interracial and international in" its "internal constitution." 'The very peoples and races who are taught in the Old World that they have an instinctive and ineradicable antipathy to one another live here side by side, in comity, often in hearty amity."[68]

Dewey visited Russia in 1928. He confessed of misguided preconceptions as to (i) "the rigidity of affairs in Russia";[69] and (ii) of the idea that Russia was a rude, disorderly and insecure people and

---

[66]John Dewey, "Confidential Report: Conditions Among the Poles in the United States," in *John Dewey: A Centennial Bibliography*, compiled by Milton Halsey Thomas (Chicago: University Press, 1962), p. 53.

[67]*Ibid.*

[68]Dewey, "America and the World," p. 644.

[69]John Dewey, *John Dewey's Impressions of Soviet Russia and the Revolutionary World, Mexico, China, Turkey, 1929*, introduction and notes by William W. Brickman (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1929), p. 54.

nation. Dewey was not deceived by Russian "show places" and rejected previous misconceptions that went contrary to the findings of direct experience.

Dewey, America's greatest savant, was favorably impressed by "the orderly and safe character of life in Russia."[70] Moreoever, he was favorably disposed to the Russian treatment of social dissidents.

> In spite of secret police, inquisitions, arrests and deportations of *Nepman* and *Kulaks*, exiling of party opponents--including divergent elements in the party--life for the masses goes on with regularity, safety and decorum. If I wished to be invidious, I could mention other countries in Eastern Europe in which it is more annoying to travel. There is no country in Europe in which the external routine of life is more settled and secure.[71]

---

[70] *Ibid.*, p. 55.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 54-55.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Philosophy, according to Dewey, is criticism. Its subject matter is the urgent and pressing conflicts of our time and place. It has a "purging" or negative function and a positive purpose. Its purging side consists "of getting rid, by means of thinking as exact and critical as possible, of perpetuations of those outworn attitudes which prevent those engaged in philosophic reflection from seizing the opportunities now open."[1] Philosophy's constructive or positive side consists of "systematic observation of the natural, the biological and societal, conditions by means of which knowing actually what goes on"[2] in an effort to project in hypothetical form policies, plans, and measures which will assist in resolving specific conflicts and dissolving present confusions.

Conflicts are particular, specific entities and "no general theory about the individual and the social can settle conflicts or even point out the way in which they should be resolved."[3]

> There can be no conflict between *the* individual and *the* social for both of these terms refer to pure abstractions. What do exist are conflicts between *some* individuals and *some* arrangements in social life; between groups and classes of individuals; between nations and races; between old traditions imbedded in institutions and new ways of thinking and acting which spring

---

[1] Dewey, *Problems of Men*, p. 16.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[3] John Dewey, "Classes, Groups and Masses," in *Intelligence in the Modern World*, p. 435.

> from those few individuals who depart from and who attach what is socially accepted.[4]

However, Dewey acknowledges that there are "a multitude of conflicts" and that "they tend to fall into classes marked by similar traits."[5] He further recognizes as one class of conflicts "the struggle between the *dominant* group and the group or groups, occupying at the time, an *inferior* position of power and economic wealth."[6]

The philosopher in order to do justice to his subject-matter must become a sensitive critic, one literally caught up in the movements of events.

> Criticism is judgment. The material out of which judgment grows is the work, the object, but is this object as it enters into the experience of the critic by interaction with his own sensitivity and his knowledge and funded store from past experiences. As to their content, therefore, judgments will vary with the concrete material that evokes them and that must sustain them if criticism is pertinent and valid.[7]

He must become personally involved, not a mere spectator. He must experience and suffer and enjoy the fruits of his calling.

> . . . the safeguard of the critic is a consuming informed interest. I say "consuming" because without natural sensitivity connection with an intense liking for certain subject matters, a critic, having even a wide range of learning, will be so cold that he will remain on the outside. Yet, unless affection is informed with the insight that is the product of a rich and full experience, judgment will be one-sided or will not rise above the level of gushy sentimentalism. Learning must be the fuel of warmth of interest.[8]

---

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 436-437.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 437.

[7] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1934), pp. 309-310.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 310.

It is with the above in mind that I wish to comment very briefly on two of Dewey's most famous books: *Democracy and Education* and *The Public and Its Problems*. And these comments, I believe, will bring out the points I have been trying to make in course of this essay. The points are that Dewey did not live up to the sort of forward-looking commitments he assigned to philosophical criticism, he was guilty of omissions and commissions which made his personal liberal convictions appear in retrospect as "half-hearted"; that his "solutions" for the pressing social problems of his own day were in fact no specific solutions at all--and the larger generalities on which he depended in formulating his "position" were on the whole highly confusing.

DEMOCRACY AND EDUCATION

In 1916, *Democracy and Education* appeared on the bookshelves of America and the world. Its appearance "was immediately hailed in some quarters as the most notable contribution to pedagogy since Rousseau's 'Emile'."[9] Cremin and many others consider *Democracy and Education* as Dewey's *magnum opus*.[10]

Dewey received critical acclaim from one of America's leading intellectuals and liberals, Walter Lippmann who entitled his review, "The Hope of Democracy". Lippmann describes the book as great "because it expresses more deeply and more comprehensively than any other that could be named the best hope of the liberal man."[11] The book is the culmination of "the mature wisdom of the finest and most powerful

---

[9]Cremin, *The Transformation of the School*, pp. 120-122.

[10]*Ibid.*

[11]Walter Lippmann, "The Hope of Democracy," review of *Democracy and Education*, by John Dewey, in *The New Republic*, July 1, 1916, p. 231.

intellect devoted to the future of American civilization."[12]

The central theme of *Democracy and Education* is the connection of democracy with education and the argument that education must become a vehicle to the realization of democratic ideals.

In his chapter entitled "The Democratic Conception in Education", Dewey is devoted "to making explicit the implications of the democratic ideas in education."[13] Education is a function of social interaction, the "securing of direction and development in the immature through their participation in the life of the group to which they belong in."[14] There are many societies and social groups, and education varies according to a social group's aims and purposes, ideals and values, that is, the quality of life that exists.

Dewey is concerned with a plurality of societies which exists under the term "society": "Society is one word, but means many things."[15] It is basically men in associations of all kinds and numbers, good and bad. They are held in such association by common interests. Societies exist in and through communicated interests held in common. However, societies do not become communities until interests which are common are consciously held and pursued. And, since any education given by a group or society socializes its members, "the conception or education as a social process and function has no definite meaning until we define the kind of society we have in mind."[16]

---

[12] *Ibid.*

[13] Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, p. 88.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 81-82.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

Dewey is concerned with the democratic community. Basic to Dewey's conception of democracy is its moral or social meaning; for Dewey the social and moral are identical. Democracy is much more than a form of political government. It is a mode of associated and communicated experience. It is "the realization of a form of social life in which interests are mutually interpenetrating, and where progress or readjustment, is an important consideration."[17] Moreover,

> A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder.[18]

The measure of worth of a democratic communal life is its facilitation of (i) full and free interplay with and among other forms of association and (ii) the establishment of common group or communal interests which are shared consciously by all. These criteria, in turn, facilitate mutual social control and habit of action. Democratic societies, if they do not meet the above criteria of a worthy communal life, will perpetuate the existing and customarily nominal system of democracy which leave individuals and communities with conflicting interests. The point is that mutual intergroup interests and interaction break down "barriers of class, race, and national territory which kept men from perceiving the full import of their activity."[19] Individuals and groups will no longer be isolated and kept ignorant by

---

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 99

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

custom and tradition; they will share in a widened area of concerns which will result in a "liberation of a greater diversity of personal capacities."[20]

Conflicts of interests and confusions have negative effects. Isolation perverts the realization of common interest among communities and mental development, and expansion is thwarted. Isolation not only leaves many interests unexplored, but perverts those who are operative. If one is to have common interest, one must have free interaction or communication of common interest with members of a particular society.[21]

Without "a variety of shared interests" "intellectual stimulation (becomes) unbalanced."[22] Isolation leads to an antisocial spirit among different associations and groups. Groups and associations tend to protect possessions, mental and physical, customary and traditional, at the expense of progressive relationships desired for needed social reconstruction.[23]

It is through free and full intercourse with other groups that "more numerous and more varied points of contact" come to "denote a greater diversity of stimuli to which an individual has to respond." This contact frees intellectual "powers which remain suppressed as long as the incitations to action are partial, as they must be in a group when in its exclusiveness shuts out many interests."[24]

---

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 84.

[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

Even more interesting is Dewey's rebuke of nationalism and prescription of "a wide social aim." He rejects the nationalistic flavor of education in favor of one with an international social perspective. Such nationalistic education, in Dewey's view, leads to international conflicts, hostilities, and war. Each nation becomes isolated and subjectively interested in its own welfare. Education is to transcend these difficulties which internally and externally plague nations. There must be "fuller, freer, and more fruitful association and intercourse of all human beings," then, and only then, will a sharing of common interest be actualized.

There are a number of interrelated criticisms which may be laid against Dewey's treatment of these general proposals in *Democracy and Education:* (i) He does not address himself to any particular or specific issue or conflict as it may effect particular groups within a democratic community and by not doing so he overlooks his own contention that philosophy should deal with the specific, urgent, and pressing conflicts and problems of the time and place;[25] (ii) his ambiguous use of the term *race*, which is due to his not specifying or making clear distinctions, fails to point out distinctions between groups. It must certainly appear as odd, to say the least, that Dewey does not say a word about racial conflicts in the United States and on the matter of racial segregation in the nation's schools; (iii) and that he, by a systematic use of terms and slogans in multifarious and vague senses, leaves a Messianic message-apparently profound--but unsuitable to

---

[25]See for a discussion, Arthur E. Murphy, "John Dewey and American Liberalism," *The Journal of Philosophy*, LVII (1962), 420-436.

provide clear guidelines for specific or unambiguous educational enterprise and social action.[26] Arthur E. Murphy in his paper entitled "John Dewey and American Liberalism" had commented in considerable detail on these ambiguities inherent in Dewey's position.[27]

THE PUBLIC AND ITS PROBLEMS

The Public and Its Problems is considered by many to be Dewey's most influential and best treatment of social philosophy. It is a book "worthy (of) the attention of all who are interested in the philosophy of politics",[28] a cogent, stimulating, fresh, suggestive and forcefully written work at Dewey's best. In fact, the claim is laid that this is Dewey's most profound work.

Man is a social animal who lives by and in association. In this sense, man, like all things, is a part of a universal "law", for all things exist and act in "connection and combination."[29] Acts which are associated phenomena have short and long term, private and public, direct and indirect consequences.

Human acts are private when they have consequences which "affect the persons directly engaged in a transaction."[30] The consequences of a private act are confined mainly to those persons who are directly

---

[26]See for a discussion, N. C. Bhattachachary, "The Role of the Teacher in John Dewey's Educational Theory," *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XIII (March, 1967), 33-42.

[27]See, Arthur E. Murphy, "John Dewey and American Liberalism," *Journal of Philosophy*, LVII (1960), 420-436.

[28]William Bennett Munro, "What's Behind Vox Populi," review of *The Public and Its Problems*, by John Dewey, in the *Yale Review*, XVIII (April, 1928), 610.

[29]Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1927), p. 22.

[30]*Ibid.*, p. 12.

engaged. When an act has consequences beyond those immediately or directly concerned, it becomes an act of public capacity or consequence and must be controlled as such.

There are public acts, but what does a public consist of? "The public consist of all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions to such an extent that it is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically cared for";[31] that is, the source of the public lies in the consequences, actual or potential or projected, concerning transactions which go beyond "persons and associations directly concerned in them"[32]

For Dewey the present condition of democratic government, as it exists in America, is such that it does not meet the demands of the newly formed "publics", and as such it does not satisfy their needs. It is a hindrance and must be superseded.

> To form itself, the public has to break existing political forms. This is hard to do because these forms are themselves the regular means of instituting change. The public which generated political forms is passing away, but the power and lust of possession remains in the hands of the officers and agencies which the dying public instituted. This is why the change of the form of states is so often effected only by revolution. The creation of adequately flexible and responsive political and legal machinery has so far been beyond the wit of man.[33]

Government is a means not an end, and should assist in the realization of man's freedom instead of perpetuating his alienation.

In order to supersede the existing political state the public must discover and identify itself. At present the public has not

---

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

identified itself and its interests are, consequently, governed by political forms and agencies which it has outgrown. This is the public's primary problem. Here Dewey is concerned with the democratic form of government within a pluralistic state, and a public which is alienated and shows a general apathy and contempt for the present state of affairs. It is a public which has outgrown its present institutions and political form.

As stated earlier, Dewey subscribes to the pluralistic conception of the democratic state, thus making for many, many "publics". It is by existing within a certain geographical and political state that these publics form the Great Society and hold interest in common, "public interest". However, the Great Society is not the Great Community. In order to establish the Great Community in the Great Society, we must recapture the commonly communicated and shared aims, beliefs, aspirations, and knowledge.

Dewey realizes that "publics", "interest groups" or local communities have interests which may conflict with one another. These are to be resolved by the use of his method of inquiry. Here the scientific, moral and social meanings of democracy come into play: community interests are to be placed above personal considerations and choices, and must be made on the basis of objective truth not personal whim, interest, or prejudices. The state is to play the role of orchestral conductor, harmonizing the activities of the various publics in the interest of the "common good" or at least the interest of the great majority.

Dewey claims his method of inquiry is a general method which is applicable to all specific social and political problems; that is,

with the proper and relevant data of each particular problematic situation, it is possible to resolve all conflicting situations. Dewey's method of inquiry briefly described: there must be an indeterminate situation; the institution of a problem; the forming of hypotheses and reasoning; experimental test; the terminated and resolved situation.

There are many questions which can be asked as to Dewey's approach to resolving intergroup social problematic situations. Is there only one problem which permeates a particular social or political situation? What if the problem is resolved to the satisfaction of the great majority? Does this necessarily resolve the problem of a minority group? The method of inquiry, he claims, when applied to social problems will resolve the situation(s) in the best possible way for all the diverse groups effected. If this is what he means, then I am inclined to agree with N. C. Bhattacharya in that "there cannot be, in fact, any such solution that will at the same time be the best solution for each of the contending publics."[34]

> There will be in fact separate problems as there are separate interest groups. Each of these groups may in Deweyan fashion--institute *the* problem, inquire into the "conditions and consequences" and seek to resolve it in a way that will, as far as possible, help the group to realize its own interests. But this will take us no nearer the resolution of the conflict. On the contrary, resolving the problem of one public to its satisfaction will create fresh and deeper problems for the other contending publics.[35]

One such problem is the treatment of America's black minority by its dominant white majority. However, Dewey does not address himself

---

[34] N. C. Bhattacharya, "John Dewey's Instrumentalism, Democratic Ideal and Education," *Educational Theory*, XVIII (Winter, 1968), 67.

[35] *Ibid.*, 65. See also, his "Philosophy, Ideology and Political Theory," *Educational Theory*, XXI (Winter, 1971), 117-125.

to this conflict; if he had done so he would have certainly found out the poverty of his proposed method for solving social problems.

This brings us to a second criticism concerning Dewey's approach to resolving problematic situations within a democratic community. He is forever talking about the particular and specific, the urgent and pressing issues and difficulties which permeates the American social scene without ever really identifying them. He never carefully analyzes different social groups and organizations in an empirical and objective way to indicate specific and urgent problems they may be facing. This does not, however, stop him from repeatedly telling philosophers that their subject matter is the pressing and urgent problems of their time and place; they are to study these problems "scientifically" in order to provide generous theories and hypotheses with a view to their resolution. Dewey never got around to doing the philosophy he prescribed others to do; he never analyzed any particular social problem providing us with detailed policies and plans for its resolution. As a matter of fact, Dewey never really participated, in a philosophical sense, in any urgent and pressing event himself, preferring always to remain on the nebulous periphery away from the maddening crowd. As one writer contends,

> The lack of exciting external events and the gradualness of Dewey's intellectual development tell us a good deal about the man. Dewey was always modest, a bit shy, respectful of others, and developed his convictions only after a good deal of experience.[36]

Whatever be the reason, Dewey either shyed away or purposefully avoided some of the most pressing difficulties that America was suffering and

---

[36]Bernstein, *John Dewey*, pp. 28-29.

yet to suffer. This is especially true with the notions of alienation in a capitalistic system and white racism. He preferred to speak of alienation in muted tones, and nowhere did he speak directly or specifically to white America's black problem. That Dewey, as a social philosopher and educator, chose to avoid the issue is seen in a letter I received from Jo Ann Boydston, the director of the Center for John Dewey Studies, in which she confirmed my suspicions that he never wrote as much as a single paper addressing himself to the problem in a manner which would provide the generous and detailed policies and plans for its resolution.[37]

It has been often said that Dewey wrote on problems which he thought of fundamental importance to the American scene. Perhaps he did not think the racial and related issues pressing and urgent enough. If this is the case, then Dewey was not as perceptive as his followers have led us to believe. However, it is more probable than not that John Dewey, being the product of his social environment, could not meet the challenge of America's greatest pride and shame: the "subordination" of the black man for economic return. Stated in broader terms, he failed to provide clear guidelines to "reconstruct" American Democracy which could reconcile "collective authority" with "individual liberty". As a result, his doctrine of social and educational liberalism remained ambiguous, and from a practical point of view, almost vacuous.

---

[37]Jo Ann Boydston, personal letter. See Appendix B.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Addams, Jane. *Democracy and Social Ethics*. New York: Mcmillan Company, 1902.

Adorno, Theodor W. *The Authoritarian Personality*. New York: Harper, 1950.

Althusser, Louis. *For Marx*. Translated by Ben Brewster. London: Penguin Press, 1965.

Aptheker, Herbert. *Marxism and Alienation: A Symposium*. New York: Published for A.I.M.S. by Humanities Press, 1965.

Barzun, Jacques. *Race: A Study in Superstition*. Revised with a new preface. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

Bernstein, Richard. *John Dewey*. New York: Washington Press, Inc., 1967.

Bhattacharya, N. C. "John Dewey's Instrumentalism, Democratic Ideal and Education." *Educational Theory*, XVIII (Winter, 1968), 60-72.

_____. "The Concept of 'Intelligence' in John Dewey's Philosophy and Educational Theory." *Educational Theory*, XIX (Spring, 1969), 185-195.

_____. "Philosophy, Ideology and Political Theory." *Educational Theory*, XXI (Winter, 1971), 117-125.

_____. "The Role of the Teacher in John Dewey's Educational Theory." *The Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, XIII (March, 1967) 33-42.

Blanshard, Brand. "Can the Philosopher Influence Social Change?" *Journal of Philosophy*, LI (1954), 741-753.

Bottomore, T. B., and Rubel, Maximilien. *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy*. Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1963.

Carmichael, Stokely, and Hamilton, Charles V. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*. New York: Random House, 1967.

Clark, Kenneth B. *Dark Ghetto: Dilemmas of Social Power*. New York: Harper & Row, 1965.

Commission on Civil Disorders. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1968.

Commission on Educational Reconstruction. *Organizing the Teaching Profession*. Glencoe: Free Press, 1955.

Cremin, Lawrence A. *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957*. New York: Random House, 1961.

Curtis, S. J., and Boultwood, M. E. *A Short History of Educational Ideas*. London: University Tutorial Press Ltd., 1953.

Davis, Allen Freeman, and McCree, Mary Lynn, eds. *Eighty Years at Hull-House*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969.

De Tocqueville, Alexis. *The Republic of the United States of America, and Its Political Institutions, Reviewed and Examined*. New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1851.

Dewey, John. *Character and Events*. 2 Vols. Henry Holt and Company, 1929.

_____. *Experience and Nature*. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1958.

_____. *Freedom and Culture*. New York: Capricorn Books, 1939.

_____. *How We Think*. Rev. ed. Boston: D. C. Health and Co., 1933.

_____. *Human Nature and Conduct*. New York: Modern Library, 1950.

_____. *Individualism, Old and New*. New York: Minton, Balch and Company, 1930.

_____. *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought*. New York: Henry and Co., 1910.

_____. *Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy*. Edited, and with an Introduction, by Joseph Ratner. New York: Modern Library, 1939.

_____. *John Dewey on Experience, Nature and Freedom*. Edited, and with an Introduction, by Richard J. Bernstein. New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1960.

_____. *Liberalism and Social Action*. New York: Capricorn Books, 1963.

_____. *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1938.

_____. *Moral Principles in Education.* New York: Philosophical Library, 1959.

_____. *Art As Experience.* New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1934.

_____. *Philosophy and Civilization.* New York: Capricorn Books, 1963.

_____. *Outlines of a Critical Theory of Ethics.* Ann Arbor: Register Publishing Company, 1891.

_____. *Problems of Men.* New York: Philosophical Library, 1946.

_____. *The Public and Its Problems.* Denver: Alan Shallow, 1927.

_____. *The Quest for Certainty.* NewYork: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1960.

_____. *Reconstruction in Philosophy.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.

_____. *Theory of Valuation.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939.

_____. *Democracy and Education.* New York: Free Press, 1966.

_____. *The School and Society.* Rev. ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953.

_____. *Impressions of Soviet Russia and the revolutionary world, Mexico, China, Turkey, 1929.* Introduction and notes by William Brickman. New York: Teachers College, 1964.

_____. *Education Today.* Edited by Joseph Ratner. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940.

_____. "Professional Organization of Teachers." *American Teacher,* September, 1916, pp. 99-101.

_____. "Why I Am a Member of the Teachers Union." *American Teacher,* January, 1928, pp. 3-6.

_____. "Confidential Report: Conditions Among the Poles in the United States." *John Dewey: A Centennial Bibliography.* Compiled by Milton Halsey Thomas. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.

_____, Tufts, James H., *Ethics.* Rev. ed. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1932.

Dummett, Ann. *A Portrait of English Racism.* Middlesex: Penguin Books, Inc., 1973.

Feuer, Lewis S., ed. *Marx & Engels: Basic Writings on Politics & Philosophy.* Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957.

Fromm, Eric. *Marx's Concept of Man*, with a translation from Marx's *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* by T. A. Bottomore. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1966.

Grimshaw, Allen D., ed. *Race Violence in the United States.* Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1969.

Hook, Sidney. *John Dewey: An Intellectual Portrait.* New York: John Day Company, 1939.

_____, ed. *John Dewey: Philosopher of Science and Freedom.* New York: Dial Press, 1950.

Hughes, Langston. *Fight for Freedom.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1967.

Humanist Magazine, March/April, 1973, pp. 18-34.

Irvine, Keith. *The Rise of the Colored Races: A History of Their Cultures, Societies, and Interplay with the White World.* New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1970.

Johnson, James Weldon. *Along This Way.* New York: Viking Press, 1954.

Josephson, Eric and Mary, eds. *Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society.* New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1962.

Kamenka, E. *Marxism and Ethics.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1969.

Katz, William Loren, ed. *Proceedings of the National Negro Conference, 1909.* New York: Arno and The New York Times, 1969.

Kellogg, Charles Flint. *NACCP: A History of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.* Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1967.

Knowles, Louis L., and Prewitt, Kenneth, eds. *Institutional Racism in America.* Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969.

Kovel, Joel. *White Racism: A Psychohistory.* New York: Random House, 1971.

Laski, Harold J. *The State in Theory and Practice.* New York: Viking Press, 1935.

_____. *The Rise of European Liberalism.* London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1936.

Lefebvre, Henri. *The Sociology of Marx.* Translated by Norbert Guterman, New York: Random House, Inc., 1969.

Russell, Bertrand. *Human Society in Ethics and Politics*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954.

_____. *Why I Am Not a Christian*. Edited with an introduction by Paul Edwards. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957.

_____. *Principles of Social Reconstruction*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1916.

_____. *Freedom versus Organization, 1776-1914*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1934.

_____. *Education and the Social Order*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1932.

_____. *The Impact of Science on Society*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1952.

_____. "John Dewey." *A History of Western Philosophy: And Its Connection with Political and Social Circumstances from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1945, pp. 819-828.

Schilpp, Paul A. "The Faith of John Dewey." *Horizons of a Philosopher: Essays in Honor of David Baumgardt*. Edited by Joseph Frank, et. al. Leiden: Brill, 1963.

_____, (ed). *The Philosophy of John Dewey*. New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1939.

Schwartz, B. N., and Disch, R., eds. *White Racism: Its History, Pathology and Practice*. New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1970.

Thomas, Milton Halsey. *John Dewey: A Centennial Bibliography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962.

White, Morton G. *Social Thought in America*. New York: Viking Press, 1949.

_____. *The Origin of Dewey's Instrumentalism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1943.

Winks, Robin W. "The Canadian Negro: A Historical Assessment." *Journal of Negro History*, LIII (October, 1968), 283-300.

_____. "The Canadian Negro: A Historical Assessment Part II: The Problem of Identity." *Journal of Negro History*, LIV (January, 1969), 1-18.

Zeitlin, Irving M. *Marxism: A Re-Examination*. Princeton: D. Van Nostrome Company, Inc., 1967.

APPENDIX A

THE DEWEY NEWSLETTER

DEWEY ON BOLSHEVISM IN CHINA

Thanks to historian David L. Wilson, we have a copy of Dewey's report of 1 December 1920 to the military attache in the American legation in China. The report is in the National Archives, State Department Record Group 59; it is reproduced here in full, with the covering letter which is unsighed. The report was declassified on 22 July 1960.

BOLSHEVISM IN CHINA

Service Report

December 2, 1920

Your attention is especially called to the following report written for us by Dr. John Dewey, Professor of Philosophy in Columbia University and Exchange Professor in China.

Dr. Dewey has made a special study of this subject in China and has had unusual opportunity of getting into touch with the element in China that may be considered as radical. I know of no one any where, better qualified to report on this important matter than Dr. Dewey.

Peking, China, December 1, 1920.

My dear Col. Drysdale:

In reply to your inquiry, I would say that I have seen no direct evidence of Bolshevism in China. I landed in Shanghai the first of May last year. In the year and a half since I have been in nine provinces, including the capitals, though much the greater part of the time has been spent in Peking. I have been in Shanghai four times, however, Hanchow twice, and spent two months in Nanking

having been there twice. I feel the surer of my belief that Bolshevism is lacking in China because I have been in close contact with the teachers, writers and students who are sometimes called Bolshevists, and who in fact are quite radical in their social and economic ideas.

The student body of the country is in the main much opposed to old institutions and existing political conditions in China. They are especially opposed to their old family system. They are disgusted with politics, and while republican in belief have decided that the Revolution of 1911 was a failure. Hence they think that an intellectual change must come before democracy can be firmly established politically. They have strong and influential leaders among the younger teachers. The great majority of the teachers are still, however, rather conservative in their ideas. The student body in China is proverbially undisciplined, taking an active hand in running the school, striking and demanding dismissal of teachers, etc. This is no new thing and is found in only slightly less degree in Japan, in spite of the great political docility there.

All of these things make the students much inclined to new ideas, and to projects of social and economic change. They have little background of experience and are inclined to welcome any idea provided it is new, or is different from what actually exists. They are practically all socialists, and some call themselves communists. Many think the Russian revolution a very fine thing. All this may seem more or less Bolshevistic. But it has not been inspired from Russia at all. I have never been able though I have tried to run down all rumors to hear of Bolshevist propagandists. In the south they are said to be in the north; in the north they are said to be in the south. I do not

doubt there are some in China, but I am sure they are not many. And I am absolutely certain they have nothing to do with the general tone and temper of radical thought in the country. A student was arrested two months ago in Peking for circulating "Bolshevist" literature. I investigated and found it was truly anarchistic, advocating the abolition of government and the family, but not Bolshevist.

However if the movement were practially dangerous it wouldn't be much matter whether it was inspired or directed from Russia or not. As matter of fact, it is the effervescence of school boys, being intellectual and emotional rather than practical. It is stimulated by the corruption and inefficiency of the government and by the pro-Japanese character of the former cabinet. It is a symptom of the change of China from old conditions to new. Much of it is rather silly and superficial, but it is a sign that the students have begun to think about social and economic matters, and is a good sign for the future, because it shows that they have awakened to a realization that a mere paper change in constitution and government is not going to help China any. Radical thought has been accentuated in consequence of the war, but it has been an accompaniement of the new movement for twenty years. The first platform of the Chinese revolutionaries, adopted in 1901 or 1902 was socialistic, and so was the program of the Kuo Min Tang, the Sun Yat Sen revolutionary party, till it was dissolved by Yuan Shih Kai. But there is no leverage in the country to bring about a social revolution or anything approaching it. The farmers are still highly conservative, and they form ninety per cent of the population. There are a good many tenant farmers, but there is much more family proprietorship. A country of peasants that will stand the famine the north is passing

through now with no rioting or outbreaks of disorder is less in danger of Bolshevism than any country on the globe. Also industrialism is only just beginning. As yet it is confined to Shanghai and about a half dozen other cities. There isn't outside of these few cities any discontented "proletariat" to appeal to. In these cities unions are forming etc., but the men are mostly interested in their wages. They are not capable of being reached by ideas of great economic changes. In Changsha a few weeks ago I was invited to attend a meeting to organize a branch of a labor association. There wasn't one actual day laborer at the meeting, mainly merchants with some students. It was much more like some civic welfare or philanthropic organization at home than any labor party, though it had been called by a national organizer sent out from Shanghai. Thus the students have no material to work upon even if they wanted to start a practical movement. Also they are still too theoretical to engage successfully in practical movements. They are quite successful in attacking some of the corrupt Anfuites two years ago, but popular opinion was strongly with them. But at present even their influence in politics where they would have a practical effect if anywhere is very slight. Most foreigners who have any contact with them wish, I think, that they were more active, and more likely to start something than they seem to be.

The sum of the whole matter is that the intellectual class is radical in its beliefs and much interested in all plans of social reform. But it is a small class, practically with its little influence, and not concerned to organize itself to get more. The whole social and economic background of Bolshevism as a practical going concern is lacking. Pick ten Chinese who are educated at random and

who are outside the official class (which during the Anfu regime tried to block the student movement by calling them Bolshevists) or ten foreigners in contact with the Chinese and you will get the same reply. Many hope that a political revolution is coming to throw out the present class of officials and to get a new start. There may be an upheaval of this sort which those who don't like it will call Bolshevist. But I'm afraid it won't come very soon, and when it does come it will be confined to doing over again the things that were pretended to be done in 1911.

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) John Dewey

****

The Dewey Newsletter, VI ([Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois, October, 19[illegible]).

APPENDIX B

The Center
for Dewey Studies

Southern Illinois University
Carbondale, Illinois 62901

18 June 1973

Mr. Everett Griffin
Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Education
The University of Alberta
Edmonton, Canada

Dear Mr. Griffin:

I know of no essays or other written material by [illegible]nn Dewey that addresses in direct fashion the Negro problem. Several years ago I came across a reference to an address that Dewey had given to the NAACP, but I was never able to locate such an item.

If there is any other aspect of your work on which we might help you, please don't hesitate to write again.

Sincerely yours,

Jo Ann Boydston

Jo Ann Boydston
Director

JAB/lz